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THE NEW REPUBLIC

CAN LABOR COME BACK?

JOHN B. JUDIS

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SAPPHO'S MESSAGE

LIMBAUGH'S LIES

NIXON'S FUNERAL

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The Big Bad Wolf

The Wicked Witch

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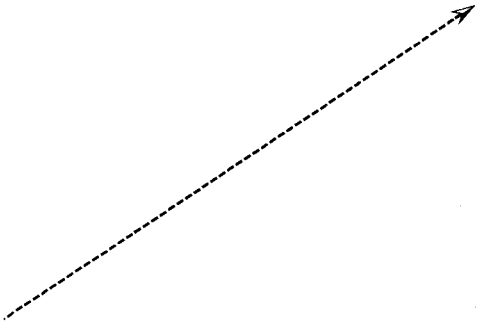

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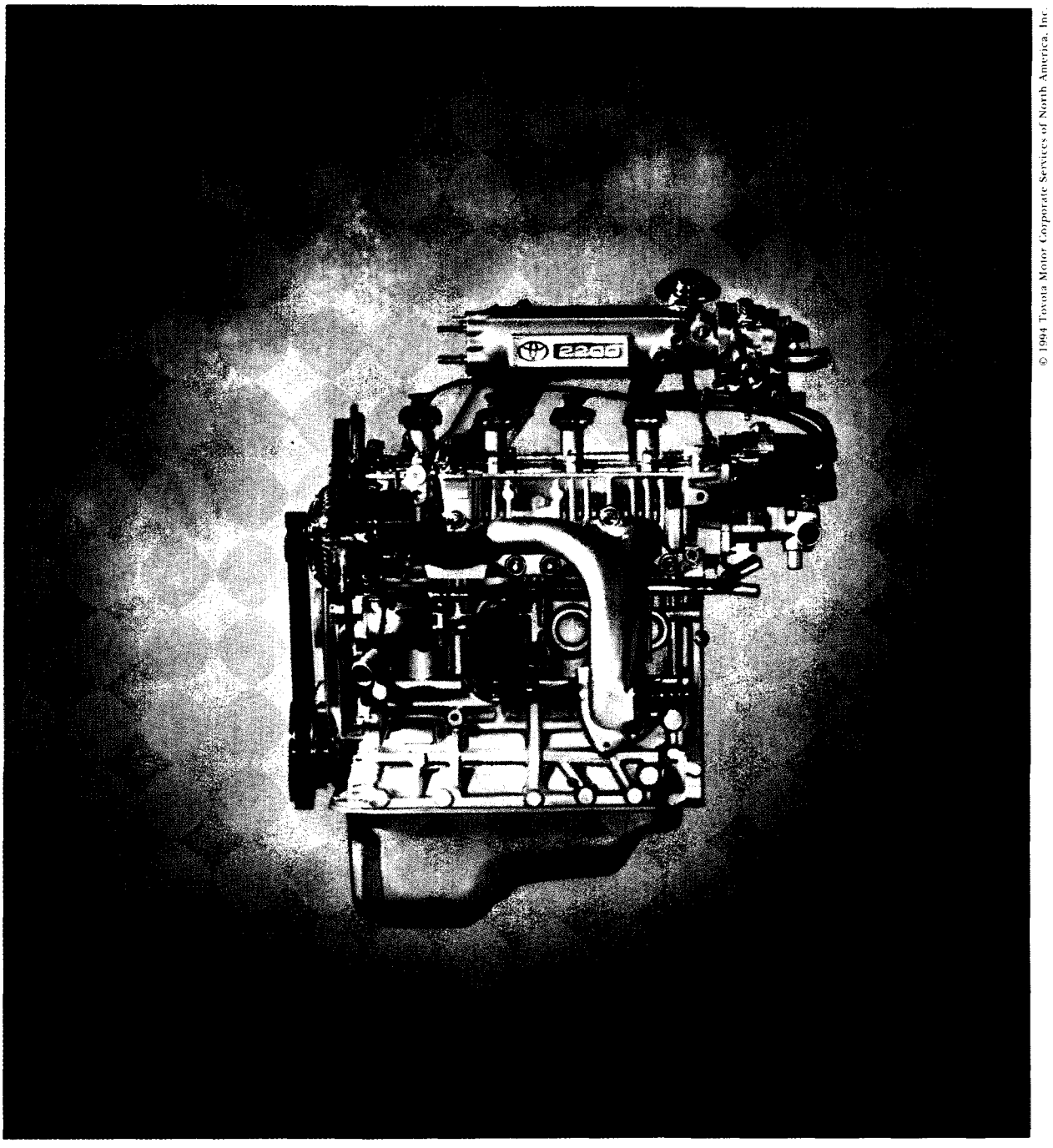

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Cover by Ross MacDonald for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 22, 25 and 30. TRB is on vacation.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Shooting back and forth

To the editors:

Hanna Rosin's "Shooting Blanks" (April 11) did not reflect even a modicum of accuracy about Shooting Back. Almost everything I told Rosin was absent from the story, and had she reported what I said, it would have prevented the untruths in your story. I will cite two examples:

(1) Your reporter pulled, from thin air, the idea that I have spoken on the lecture circuit almost every day for the past three years. The reality is that when I am afforded the opportunity to speak at a college or university, I extol the virtues of people dedicating their lives to helping less fortunate people, and I also promote the good work of Shooting Back.

(2) Rosin states that the mothers of three children who allege they will sue us this year did not sign copyright forms. The truth of the matter is that each mother signed not only one, but two forms, in two separate years. Copies of the forms are retained in our offices, along with thousands of other documents, and are provided when requested. Unfortunately, when Rosin asked for the documents, the only two people who work for Shooting Back in Minneapolis were out of the state opening the photo exhibit in Washington, D.C. I told Rosin clearly that I would be glad to send the documents as soon as I returned to Minneapolis.

Your story was hostile and self-serving, intentionally omitting any positive information about Shooting Back, such as the stories of the hundreds of children we have served and the formation of a scholarship fund to help Shooting Back participants with college tuition.

What good is served by hurting a small nonprofit that struggles to help hundreds of young people? Your negative stance is repulsive and counterproductive to truly building a society that is healthy for our young people.

JIM HUBBARD
Founder and Executive Director
Shooting Back
Washington, D.C.

Hanna Rosin replies:

My idea about how many times Hubbard speaks came from his agent, Jodi Solomon. Her direct quote was: "He speaks almost every day. In three years he's had more dates than any other speaker. He's busy almost all the time." I wrote in the story that Hubbard insists he has the copyright forms but could not produce them; I told him my deadline, and he offered to send them after it had passed. As for the scholarship fund he mentions, so far only one child has received a $1,000 check. There is no formal application process, and Shooting Back won't say how much money is in the fund.

Tragic

To the editors:

I am flattered that Walter Laqueur considers my book *The Soviet Tragedy* to be "among the most important studies of modern Russian history to appear in many years" ("The Long Goodbye," April 11), but I would have been even happier if he had said more about what makes it noteworthy. So, in imitation of Marx and Lenin, I drafted a set of "theses," to introduce a trio of forthcoming translation. It runs as follows:

Now that the Soviet "experiment" is at last history, its disastrous outcome makes it clear that it was never a variant of "modernity," achieved through forced "development" from above to overcome Russia's "backwardness," but that it had all along been a totalitarian tragedy. The question then arises: How could such a monumental failure have been such an irresistible success? The answer lies in the universalistic pretensions of socialism.

"Socialism" in itself is meaningless, embracing as it does programs from mere cooperatives to comprehensive welfare states to nationalization and the planning of the entire economy. Yet all these programs have at their core the moral principle that political democracy is incomplete, indeed exploitive, without the social democracy of economic equality. And equality cannot be attained so long as there are differences of wealth, founded on private property. The maximal version of this program was defined by Marx in his *Manifesto*: "The theory of the Communists may be summed up in a single phrase: abolition of private property."

The question then becomes, who gets the property? In theory, society does, but in practice society can effect this revolutionary equalization only through the state. Further, the nationalization of all wealth logically entails the suppression of profit, and the means for realizing profit, the market.

But it turned out that such noncapitalism did not arise spontaneously from the "Logic of History." Therefore, history's hand had to be forced by a special group of the enlightened—Lenin's "vanguard party." But the resulting concentration of all economic and political power in a single set of hands turned out to be the perfect formula for despotism. And so the unimpeachable moral idea of democratic equality paradoxically became the ideological basis for totalitarianism.

But why did this paradox first become manifest in Russia? The usual answer is that backward Russia "was not ready for socialism"; so the noble experiment was denatured by Russia's autocratic heritage. But a more likely explanation is that no country, ever, is "ready for socialism" in the maximal sense of noncapitalism; if such a program was eventually tried in Russia, it was only because her weak "civil society" collapsed under the strain of World War I, thereby creating a tabula rasa, in the form of a dispersed peasantry, that permitted the Bolsheviks to proceed to total "statization."

To be sure, the Russian void of 1917 could have been filled by the right: but such a regime would have been only a Russian Francoism or national conservatism that could hardly have mesmerized the planet, or found clients and imitators from China to Cuba as well as among the Western intelligentsia; nor would it have attempted collectivization and a total "plan." Thus the decisive ingredient in the Communist mix was ideological socialism, not Russian "Oriental despotism."

But did Leninism have to go to the extremes of Stalinism? Was there not a humane, Bukharinist alternative of "growing into socialism through the market"? Yes, if the issue was only economic development. But decidedly no, if the issue was preserving the Party's monopoly of power against any return of capitalism, for market forces soon would have meant the revival of civil society. Since this second alternative was the real issue for the Party, that ultimate Leninist, Stalin, chose collectivization and industrialization through revolution from above.

For a time this solution generated impressive economic growth in a few sectors, but eventually its human cost overburdened the system's performance and revealed its ideology as a lie. The will to coerce accordingly waned, and so the system imploded under Gorbachev, leaving not "development," only rubble. And the resulting devastation is such that it will require a generation or more for Russia to become a "normal" society. This is the perverse logic that drove the Soviet tragedy.

MARTIN MALIA
Berkeley, California

No solution

To the editors:

In "Day Careless" (April 18), Paul

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Offner mischaracterizes the child-care advocacy community's position on child-care regulations when he states that we believe "when it comes to day care, the state knows best." On the contrary. Parents are able to choose care that is best for their children. Recent studies confirm that parents recognize the elements of child care quality: a loving relationship between caregiver and child, adequate stimulation and a safe and healthy environment. But parents cannot exercise choice if there are no such quality options available to them—and mothers on welfare have the fewest choices of all. They often live in neighborhoods where there are fewer child-care programs than in higher income areas. It is not surprising, therefore, that low-income parents are the least satisfied with child care quality. Offner's solution to the problem—simply to remove all regulations—is no solution at all.

We do not want to require that all children be cared for in child-care centers. What we *are* asking is that *very* basic child care health and safety requirements that already apply to other public funding—such things as first-aid training, smoke detectors and unlimited parental access—also apply to child care funded through welfare reform. Yes, mothers receiving welfare do decide how to house their families, what to feed their children and when to take them to the doctor. There are also building codes and fire standards for housing, a Food and Drug Administration for protection of consumers from unsafe food and requirements for the licensing of medical personnel.

BARBARA REISMAN, *Executive Director*
ANN COLLINS, *Program Coordinator*
Child Care Action Campaign
New York, New York

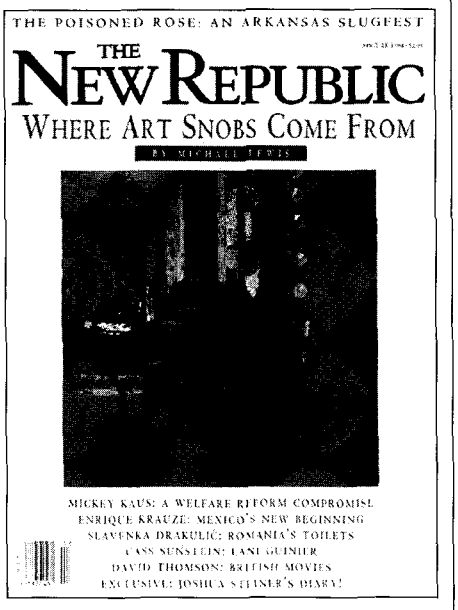
Ironic

To the editors:

How ironic that you should choose the Rev. Jesse Jackson's recent trip to Israel to raise the specter of "Arab terrorism" (Notebook, May 2). I submit for your consideration the remarks made by the Rev. Jackson (before a mostly Arab-American audience) at a Washington, D.C., briefing shortly after he returned from Israel and the occupied territories:

> There is a lot of intense oppression and the naysayers and cynics who condition themselves for war preparation rather than peace preparation exploit the politics of fear, the cynicism and despair, and therefore they act out their fears through acts of sabotage, through acts of terror. We must break the cycle of pain, break the cycle of terror. War has been tried over and over again. It has failed to produce any fruit on the tree. In reality, peace is already bearing fruit. Recognition is fruit on the peace tree. Going back home with security—fruit on the peace tree. Setting up one's own government, world recognition—fruit on the peace tree. Already $2 billion committed for creating an infrastructure—fruit on the peace tree. A chance to end the oppressive curfews, open the schools, employ the unemployed, train the youth to lay rocks and not just throw them, these possibilities are now real.... I am convinced that once the reality sets in that the land is now being developed, it is going to solidify in a major way the Palestinians around the world. And allies around the world will rally. Then we are talking about coexistence rather than co-annihilation.

Is this the "malice" to which TNR referred? If so, then let us hope rejectionists on both sides in the Middle East (as well as TNR's editors) are infected with a healthy dose of it.


THE POISONED ROSE: AN ARKANSAS SLUGFEST
THE
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WHERE ART SNOBS COME FROM
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EXCLUSIVE: JOSHUA STEINER'S DIARY!

GEORGE SHADROUI
Director, Communications
Arab American Institute
Washington, D.C.

Gilded cage

To the editors:

Regarding "Steiner's Nuts" by Douglas G. McGrath in the April 25 TNR: please be advised that lacrosse players do not wear "masks." They wear helmets complete with a metal "cage" that protects the face and teeth. These helmets come with a brim that can also be useful in protecting individuals when you know what is coming down ... as "Flap" would know.

CRAIGAN P. SHIRLEY
Alexandria, Virginia

Doomed

To the editors:

Lying in bed on a blissfully idle Sunday morning recently, I shared silly faces, coffee and the remnants of *The New York Times* with a woman with whom I have had the good fortune to fall in love. She claims to share this noble feeling, and so, playfully prodding, I inquired what it was about me that first caught her attention. Was it, I speculated luxuriantly, the revelation of my years of world travel? The seeming grace with which I moved from a discussion of human rights abuse in Central America to that of the philosophy of the Enlightenment? My knowledge of Italian cooking? Or merely the banal allure of Irish-green eyes? Imbued with the imagination of a self-inflated overachiever, my mind flitted from one seductive possibility to the next.

"THE NEW REPUBLIC."

"What?"

"THE NEW REPUBLIC. I noticed you read THE NEW REPUBLIC. My parents read it, and so do I. I thought there might be some common ground."

Something of a come-down I have to say. But then, it was probably good for my ego. In any event, I am sure glad I had left a copy on the coffee table. By all means, renew my subscription!

D. M. MCMAHON
New Haven, Connecticut

Hoover

To the editors:

Would you guys please send along some kleenex? I am crying my eyes out and shaking like jell-o. After charmelting a frosted pop-tart, I used all of my wife's q-tips to clean out the inside of the toaster. Now, realizing she will be home in a matter of minutes, which leaves precious little time before I will have to face the muzak, I am cowed with fear.

For you see, she is the director of marketing communications for a band-aid company and, consistent with the peccadilloes of the breed, she tends to get rather touchy about the most inconsequential of things.

JEFFREY MICHAEL KANE
Gahanna, Ohio

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAY 23, 1994

THE FINAL TWO

In the White House, as the Supreme Court roulette wheel shudders to a halt, the air is thick with political calculations. Which of the three currently leading candidates—Richard Arnold, José Cabranes, or Amalya Kearse—will offend the fewest interest groups and score the most diversity points? As *The New York Times* reports, each candidate has been assigned to a demographic category—Hispanic, white male, women and black—and has been evaluated on the basis of electoral rather than judicial considerations. What a depressing calculation. As a result, the man Clinton almost designated last time around, Stephen Breyer, the gifted chief judge of the First Circuit and one white man too many, no longer seems to be under serious consideration. This is a shame: Breyer would add tremendous cerebral velocity to the Court. And while Arnold, Cabranes and Kearse are all qualified for the job, there are clear differences among the three that have nothing to do with demographics or politics. It's these considerations Bill Clinton should take into account in making his choice.

Ironically, the interest groups this year are far more astute than the White House vetters assume. Liberal Hispanic groups, for example, have been lukewarm about José Cabranes of Connecticut because they fear that a right-leaning Latino moderate will be less sympathetic to their pet causes than a white liberal. Black groups, similarly, have failed to rally behind Amalya Kearse of New York because they understand that the reclusive former corporate lawyer is unlikely to be a crusader for the civil rights establishment. It is telling—and encouraging—that two of the best minority judges in the country refuse to toe the party line on civil rights.

On another front, a rump movement in the White House is scrambling to pull a "politician" out of the hat. The names most frequently bandied about are Paul Sarbanes, Pat Leahy, Joe Lieberman and Bruce Babbitt. But "politicians" are no more interchangeable a category than women or blacks; and the notion that the shy Sarbanes, or the simplistic Leahy, would be a political force on the Rehnquist Court is naive. The most effective justices have been politically *and* legally sophisticated, and we are not convinced that any of the politicians on the hastily cobbled-together list would be prepared to challenge Scalia on his own terms.

Clinton is right that a gregarious jurist might be a good addition to the Rehnquist Court. This would argue against the monastic Judge Kearse; but the more serious argument is that her intelligent but cautious and measured voice would not be a distinctive addition to a Court of Ginsburgs and Souters. As between Cabranes and Arnold, there is much to be said for each. Cabranes combines a concern for civil liberties with a suspicion of crusading activism. In light of the debacle of Clarence Thomas, who speaks only through ghostwriters, it would be good for the country to have a Hispanic on the Court who has complicated views on race, and who argues them with intellectual force. Cabranes has a reflectiveness without which no justice can help build a consensus. And there would be almost no important opposition to his nomination.

Arnold's virtues have already been enumerated in these pages (see "For Arnold," TNR, May 2). In addition to a first-rate mind, he has the political temperament Clinton seeks. As a small-town civil rights and corporate lawyer in Texarkana, he logged more trial experience than any current Supreme Court justice. Some at the White House fear an Arnold appointment has no obvious political benefits. But in fact, over the past few weeks, an outpouring of support from all sides has testified to Arnold's reputation. In the Senate, Arnold has already been embraced by Democrats Biden, Bumpers, DeConcini, Prior and Wellstone, and by Republicans Hatch, Pressler, Cochran and Mack, suggesting his hearings would come close to a Ginsburgian lovefest.

More than 100 federal judges have written to the White House to express their support; and many of the current justices have privately told their clerks they think Arnold is the best candidate. The only argument against him is health. (He has a benign case of lymphoma that has been in remission since 1978.) But the administration now agrees with Arnold's doctors that the condition, although chronic, is not a threat to Arnold's life or work.

Although it has provoked little interest, this Supreme Court vacancy is one of the more serious tests of Clinton's presidency. Does Clinton care about the future of jurisprudence, or about the myth of political clout and the chimeric politics of identity? If last year's appointment proved anything, it was that, at his best, this president knows better. We hope this time, with either Cabranes or Arnold, he again makes the right choice for the right reasons. •

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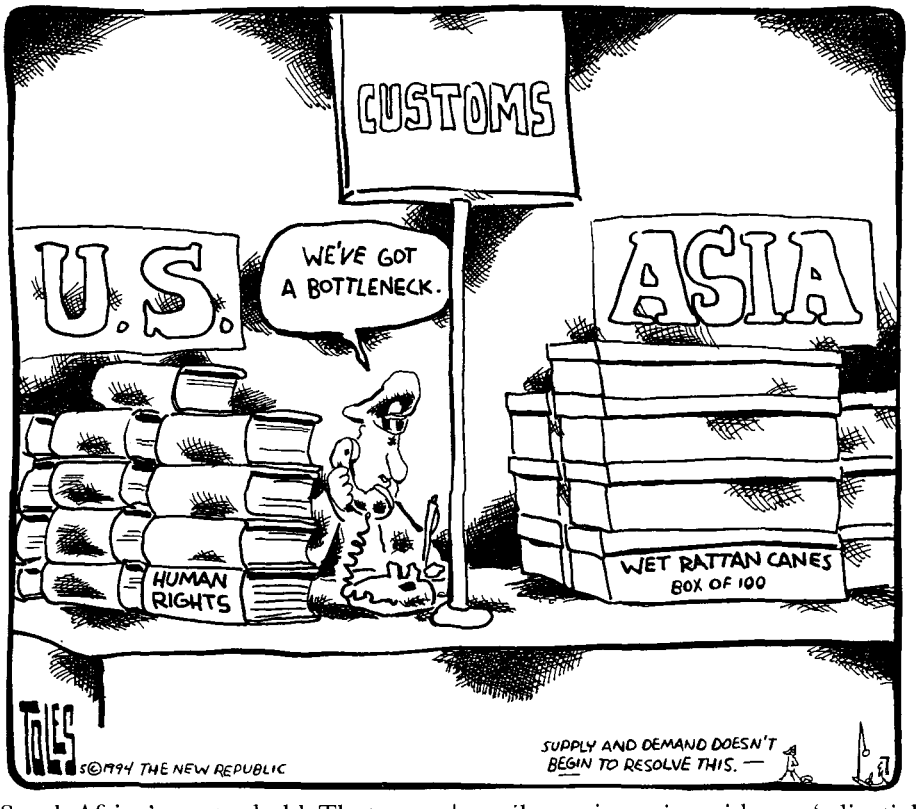
NOTEBOOK

LIBERATION: Around the world, the collapse of Soviet communism helped release not only the repressed energy of democrats, but also the pent-up fury of ethnic chauvinists. For every velvety Czechoslovakia, there was a charred Yugoslavia. In Africa, especially, the end of the superpower contest seemed to spark tribal and factional warfare: in Angola, Zaire, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia and now Rwanda. For a time, it was depressingly possible that South Africa, the potential engine of sub-Saharan growth and renewal, would join the list of slaughterhouses. Horrendous, ethnically tinged violence plagued the country's democratic transition from the time it was initiated in 1990 until two weeks before people went to the polls. All the more reason, then, to marvel at the massive, peaceful turnout of voters in the recently concluded election, and the acceptance by all parties of Nelson Mandela's landslide victory. In the end, South Africa's center held. That center consists of white leaders such as F. W. de Klerk, who saw that apartheid must be abandoned by negotiation or else there would be a bloody revolution, and of black leaders such as soon-to-be President Mandela, who saw that liberation could not be built out of resentment and retribution. The pact among these leaders has now been ratified by the vast majority of South Africans. (The Pan-Africanist Congress—the radical "one settler, one bullet" crowd—garnered just 1 percent of the vote.) The framework for the next five years of transitional government will give a share of power to every party that won more than 5 percent in the election, which means that de Klerk and his economic portfolio ministers will continue to be in the Cabinet. So, too, will Inkatha Party leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who abandoned his election boycott in order to avoid permanent isolation, and to keep power in Natal. To be sure, the new government faces a daunting array of problems, but the ANC's prospects for managing them have been enhanced by the inclusiveness of the new constitutional arrangement—and by the enfranchised citizenry's inspiring display of peaceful, civic moderation. Even those of us leery of another false dawn of hope in Africa have reason to rejoice.



WHY *NATIONAL REVIEW* S——: "I like Beavis and Butt-head," declares James Gardner in the May 2 issue of *National Review.* "I liked them from the first time I channel-surfed into their airspace." Gardner, the undersung author of a book titled *Culture—Or Trash?*, writes that the show "contains some of the most authentic and provocative dialogue on the airwaves." But while Gardner applauds their culturally important language, his editors at *National Review* apparently find it unfit for their readers. "As their comments reveal," *National Review* prints, "Beavis and Butt-head inhabit a Manichaean world ruled not by good and evil, but by what's cool and what s—s. On one occasion, Beavis observes: 'This music s—s. I hate things that s—.' ... On another occasion, Butt-head describes a singer in a video as 'a lipstick-wearing, whining w——.' Then he wonders aloud: 'Hey, Beavis, do you think that if I sang like a w—— I could get some chicks?' Beavis: 'Well, you look like a w——.' Butt-head: 'Shut up, Beavis.' Beavis: 'And you talk like a w——.' Butt-head: 'I'll kick your a— like a w—— if you don't shut up.' "

MOMENT OF GRACE:

Saint Peter's Cathedral

Temporary Suspension of Perpetual Adoration

Due to environmental works currently taking place around St. Peter's Cathedral, Perpetual Adoration has been suspended each day from 8:00 pm until 8:00 am until further notice.

The Chapel of Adoration will remain open during the day from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm

—*The Irish News*, April 16, 1994

(Thanks to Jonathan Stevenson, Belfast, Britain.) •

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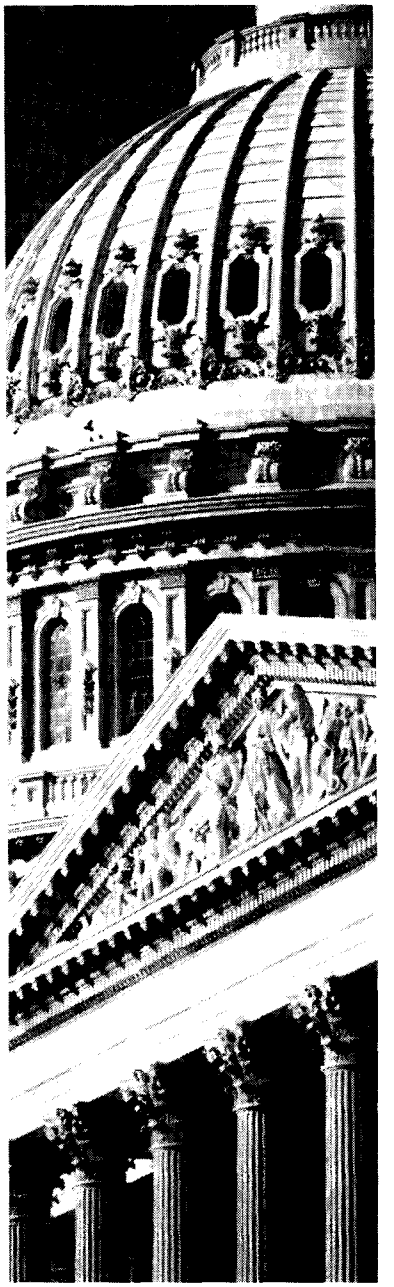
Satisfaction with
MANAGED CARE PHYSICIANS
83%

Satisfaction with
MANAGED CARE OVERALL
80%

Satisfaction with
OUT-OF POCKET EXPENSES
70%

(source: Mellman-Lazaurus-Lake National Survey 1000 - Americans, September 1993)



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Anatomy of a yarn-spinner.

LIMBAUGH'S LIES

By Joshua Shenk

On March 10 the Dow fell sharply and Treasury bonds were "battered" as new Vince Foster rumors—murder!, suicide in Virginia!—buzzed through Wall Street. The White House denied the rumors, which apparently first appeared in a memo written by a Washington consulting firm. But the firm—Smick Johnson International—was a bit actor in this drama. Rush Limbaugh played the lead. Palpably gleeful, Limbaugh rushed to his 20 million listeners with a third- or fourth-hand account of the Smick Johnson report. He gave updates all afternoon, but never got the story straight. At one point he said his source was a "White House consulting firm." Confronted about the rumors on "Nightline," Rush lied again several times.

Though Limbaugh's listeners think he "tells it like it is," anyone who cares to check can see that he repeats rumors with abandon and twists facts at whim. In just a month's broadcasting (April, including some January repeats), I counted the following uncorrected errors.

Limbaugh declared on January 19 that Iran-contra produced "absolutely no evidence" of criminal activity, "not one indictment." Robert McFarlane, Eliot Abrams, Duane R. Clarridge, Alan Fiers, Clair E. George and Richard Secord all either pleaded guilty or were convicted of lying to or withholding information from Congress. Caspar Weinberger was indicted but pardoned (along with McFarlane, Abrams, Clarridge, Fiers and George).

On April 18 Limbaugh's topic was the military. He said that during the Gulf war "everybody in the world was aligned with the United States, except who? The United States Congress." Ahem. Both the Senate and the House approved the use of force against Iraq. He continued: "For the first time in American history, U.S. military personnel [in Bosnia] are not under the command of United States generals. They are under the command of the United Nations and NATO." This isn't true, either. In 1965, 14,000 U.S. troops were sent to the Dominican Republic under the command of a Brazilian general appointed by the Organization of American States. There was multilateral command in both world wars.

For weeks, Limbaugh has been smitten with C. C. Meyers, the contractor credited with finishing repairs on the earthquake-damaged Santa Monica freeway seventy-four days early. Limbaugh calls this a "great American story." "There was one key element that made this happen," he said on April 13. "One key thing: the governor of California declared [the bridge] a disaster area and by so doing eliminated the need for competitive bids." On April 15 he added, "They gave this guy the job without having to go through the rigmarole ... of giving 25 percent of the job to a minority-owned business and 25 percent to a woman.... All those federal rules got suspended." "Government," he concluded, "got the hell out of the way."

Bypassed competitive bidding? No. The process was put on a fast track, but C. C. Meyers still had to beat out four other contractors. Waived the affirmative action rules? No. None of Governor Wilson's executive orders dealt with these requirements. At least 40 percent of all Meyers's subcontracts went to women or minority-owned firms. Rush also omitted to mention the dozens of state employees on the job twenty-four hours a day. And the federal government picked up the whole tab.

Or take the story of Todd Johnson, a San Francisco graffiti artist who recently has been charged with thousands of dollars in vandalism. The real crime, Rush said on April 15, is that the judge sentenced Johnson to community service teaching high school kids "spray paint art." "This guy gets caught and he's gotta do community service and they decide that the community service is helping teach others how to do it." A good story, but mostly made up. Johnson has been charged, but not tried. He's pleading not guilty. And he's been teaching the class since November.

On January 11 Limbaugh mocked liberals at Chelsea Clinton's Sidwell Friends School for assigning eighth-graders to write a paper on "Why I feel guilty being white." His source was CBS News—"I am not making this up"—which never reported such a story. Sidwell Friends, where at least one-quarter of the student body is nonwhite, denied it. In his gushing over Richard Nixon on April 27, Limbaugh took time out to respond to Michael Gartner, who had written critically of Nixon in *USA Today*. Gartner resigned as head of NBC News after several ethical lapses in its coverage, most notably the rigged explosion of a G.M. truck. Although Gartner clearly bore ultimate responsibility for the incident, according to Limbaugh, Gartner "faked news with the express hope of destroying General Motors."

These are just the obvious factual errors. I'm not counting the loopy nonsequiturs. Limbaugh said last March that women shouldn't serve on juries when "good-looking studs" are on trial, since all the women voted to acquit the Menendez brothers. (This was the case with Erik, but not Lyle.) On the environment, he disproves global warming by showing videos of blizzards. In nearly the same breath, Limbaugh is outraged over encroachments on Social Security benefits (April 14) and opposed to Social Security altogether (April 19). On April 18 he argued that the United States has no role in Bosnia, but then berated Clinton for standing by while "there are people still being slaughtered in droves." He regularly calls himself "a journalist in relentless pursuit of the truth," but then justifies reporting rumors by saying "I've never put myself out as a journalist." He can say that again. •

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Inside Nixon's funeral.

SILK AQUA BLAZER

By Jennifer Allen

"You think when Bush dies, he's going to get this?" one woman asked, "and this, even after Watergate." The woman, who spoke with an Eastern European accent, was looking out at the three-mile line of people waiting to view President Richard Nixon in a closed-casket repose here in the library situated beside his boyhood home. Turning up the collar on her wool coat, the woman headed toward the end of the line, which from here seemed to have no end.

It was nearing midnight after a day of hail and wind and rain. There were puddles and wet slippery grass and flickering street lamps. There was yellow police-line DO NOT CROSS tape everywhere. There were cars blocking the four lanes of the boulevard. Kids on skateboards, babies in backpacks, men in three-piece suits. Some carried flowers, some American flags, one a lengthy handwritten letter that began, "Dear Mr. President." Seven Eagle Scouts stood in a huddle, all of them wearing ties, caps and sashes decorated with thirty-three patches. The Eagle Scouts were not yet in line, just watching the line and waiting for someone to help them "pull some strings" to get in, one 17-year-old said.

"People will eat you alive," a sheriff told me, should I try to cut in line. "They're self-policing out here." The sheriff had been on duty for five hours and was now offering advice to those who intended to enter the repose on the night before the funeral. "No cameras allowed. No flash," he said. "If you do, you'll have people with suits and dark glasses coming down on you." The sheriff talked of "when the Secret Service takes over" as if it were something of which even he was fearful. "You're safe now," he told a group of citizens who were considering entering the six-hour line at this late hour, "but when the Secret Service says doors close, the doors close."

Down the road the doors were open, mostly garage doors where people stood, serving coffee and tea and hot chocolate. "Nobody's holding you up," noted one 60ish woman who had been waiting in line four hours. "Houses let you use their bathrooms. Candy bars are only $1!" Donuts were free. Arm bands a mere $2. "Every minute has been worth it," she added. "I would stay out here another six hours just to pay my respects."

"Where are we?" asked a teenage girl, lying on her back, on the damp asphalt. "No idea," said her friend. Next to her friend was a boy, also on his back, who correctly informed them, "We're in the middle of a cul-de-sac."

"So, why are you here?" one girl asked the boy.

"My dad's here—it's a part of history," the boy said. "Why are you here?"

"Extra credit," said the girls.

"Christ!" said the boy, rolling over, "You get extra credit?"

"There's a lot of healing going on," one native Yorba Lindan told me, her arm around her 80-year-old mother. They had made it into the repose and were drinking hot chocolate served by a long-haired guy under a lantern-laced trailer parked in a driveway. The mother warned us to get in line and pay our respects to a "great man." "He's lying very peacefully," her daughter assured me.

"NIXON FOREVER, MORE FAMOUS THAN THE PRESS!" is one of the signs I saw as I headed down Yorba Linda Boulevard to the funeral. Due to family allegiance, I did not sit with the press. I was with mourners, who wore purple "R.N." pins and held green, tassle-bound programs that included quotes and photos of Nixon. I sat in a white wooden folding chair in the last row, where reporters' notebooks grazed the back of my head and their feet tapped my chair legs through the makeshift plastic-cloth fence that separated us from them.

There was a man in front of me on a portable phone. There was another in a ponytail, a bolo-tie and a silk aqua blazer. There was a woman who had one shoe off, one on, and alternated this pose throughout the service. While those beside me performed the sign of the cross, those behind me chewed gum and offered commentary. When the former presidents entered, we all stood.

"Could you please sit down?!" a member of the press shouted. "Sit down, please!"

"Oh, come on," pleaded another, "we're the press!"

It was unclear to me, in this outdoor church, with swaying trees and dark clouds and scaffolding holding Hollywood-size lights, whether we stood in reverence to the former presidents or merely to see them entering the arena. Reagan received the first applause, actually the only applause, during the entire service.

As the band played "My Country 'Tis of Thee," the casket was set on the bier and you could hear the gum popping, cameras clicking, a helicopter hovering. "How American," said Senator Bob Dole, while others spoke of Shakespeare and Sophocles, "the day of judging," China and heaven. A bird strayed from limb to limb of a eucalyptus. Gordon Liddy saluted the casket as it was lifted and carried away for the committal. Reverend Billy Graham asked us to bow our heads in prayer, and the fence of scribblers became a silent majority of bowed heads, shut eyes and still pens.

We all stood during the committal, though we could not see the flag being handed to Nixon's daughters, or the lingering profile of his brother, Don. We also missed the sight of the soldiers firing a salute that made everyone around me, including myself, jump. "What's that?" one woman shrieked, and the service was over. Women pulled out their compacts, men pulled out their portable phones, many performed chair-tipping handshakes.

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"Its so good to see you—with food in your mouth!" one mourner greeted the other at an after-service reception. We were pressed up against one another in the Nixon library, its floor lined with prayer candles, flowers, offerings; its walls lined with windows and photographs of Nixon in the garden and in office; its air filled with Washington. I skimmed through the room, running into the Secret Service and a curtained pathway with a sign that read "QUIET PLEASE." This was off-limits to everyone but President Ford and some silver-trayed waiters. I kept on, passing the man who played football with Nixon, the woman who babysat for the daughters, a former ambassador of Iran and a guy who claimed to have worked with Nixon somehow somewhere. I passed a lean Chuck Robb and a polka-dot dressed Linda Baines Johnson, Henry Kissinger and the president of Carl's Jr., a fast food burger chain. I passed all the navy suits and red ties and pressed shirts until I found, beyond it all, a miniature replica of the house where Richard Milhous Nixon was born. There, a note read:

> I was born on January 9, 1913, in my parents' bedroom. It was the coldest day in one of the coldest winters in California history. Our family doctor, who had driven out to Yorba Linda in a horse and buggy from Whittier twelve miles away, wrapped me in a blanket after delivering me, put me in a laundry basket to keep warm. Years later he told me that his main recollection was that I had the strongest and loudest voice of any baby he had delivered.

The note was signed R.N. By now, his daughters had arrived and formed a receiving line along a windowed wall of the library. The rain was starting up again. You could see the rain, through the windows, coming down on the garden and the house beyond, while inside his daughters stood, nodding, half smiling, shaking hands.

JENNIFER ALLEN is a freelance writer.

Why workfare matters.

REAGAN'S RULE

By Paul Offner

There's good news and bad news about the president's emerging welfare reform plan. The good news is, it's full of important changes in policy, even if they won't be fully phased in until around 2010. The bad news is that not every policy change is a good idea. One, in particular, should be scrapped: the proposal to scuttle workfare, the centerpiece of reform efforts in the Reagan-Bush era.

For Ronald Reagan, welfare reform *was* workfare. Reagan argued that welfare recipients should have to work in return for their checks (the number of hours would be determined by dividing the welfare grant by the minimum wage). Those who didn't work would lose part of their grant, though they would still receive money for their children. In 1981 Reagan convinced Congress to let states experiment with the concept. He promoted it throughout the '80s in the face of stiff opposition from public employee unions, which worried that recipients would take jobs away from their members, and client advocates, who balked at any requirements on recipients. In 1988, while liberals fought to make education and job training part of welfare reform, Reagan kept pushing workfare. The legislation that emerged, the Family Support Act, included both.

In retrospect, the liberals got the better of the deal. Welfare administrators responsible for carrying out the new law steered recipients toward school and away from work. Not surprisingly, workfare all but vanished. Fewer than half of 1 percent of recipients now work in community jobs in return for their checks.

Today, however, both Democrats and Republicans emphasize a welfare-to-work shift, so the tide may be turning. Yet Clinton's welfare task force opposes workfare. There is no evidence that workfare reduces the welfare rolls, the task force says in its latest report. True. But there have been few careful studies of the subject, and the few that have been done looked only at whether workfare got people already on welfare to leave the rolls, not whether requiring recipients to work would discourage them from applying in the first place. Also, there is little evidence that financing education or job training gets people off welfare either, yet we pour hundreds of millions of dollars into such programs.

The task force says workfare jobs are not "real" because they don't pay wages and thus have "far less dignity" than regular employment. But who defines "dignity"? While workfare's foes say it is demeaning, participants have few complaints. When Ohio asked its workfare enrollees what they thought of the state's program, 72 percent said it had improved their job prospects, and 67 percent said it had increased their self-respect. The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation found similar attitudes in other states.

Still, the Clinton task force thinks it has a better idea: work-for-wages. Recipients would be offered a job providing a specific number of hours of work and would be paid an hourly wage plus Social Security benefits. Since this is more like "real" work, it is presumed to have more of a deterrent effect on welfare applications: no work, no pay. That's why analysts like TNR's Mickey Kaus support the idea (see "Tough Enough," April 25). By contrast, a workfare participant who doesn't show up only loses *part* of the grant. And even that can be contested.

The Clintonites like work-for-wages so much that they want to force states to use it in place of workfare. Unfortunately, the plan has significant flaws. First, what about welfare recipients who have physical or behavioral problems but don't qualify for disability benefits? The administration proposes to exempt some of them—about 10 percent of the caseload—if they can show that they

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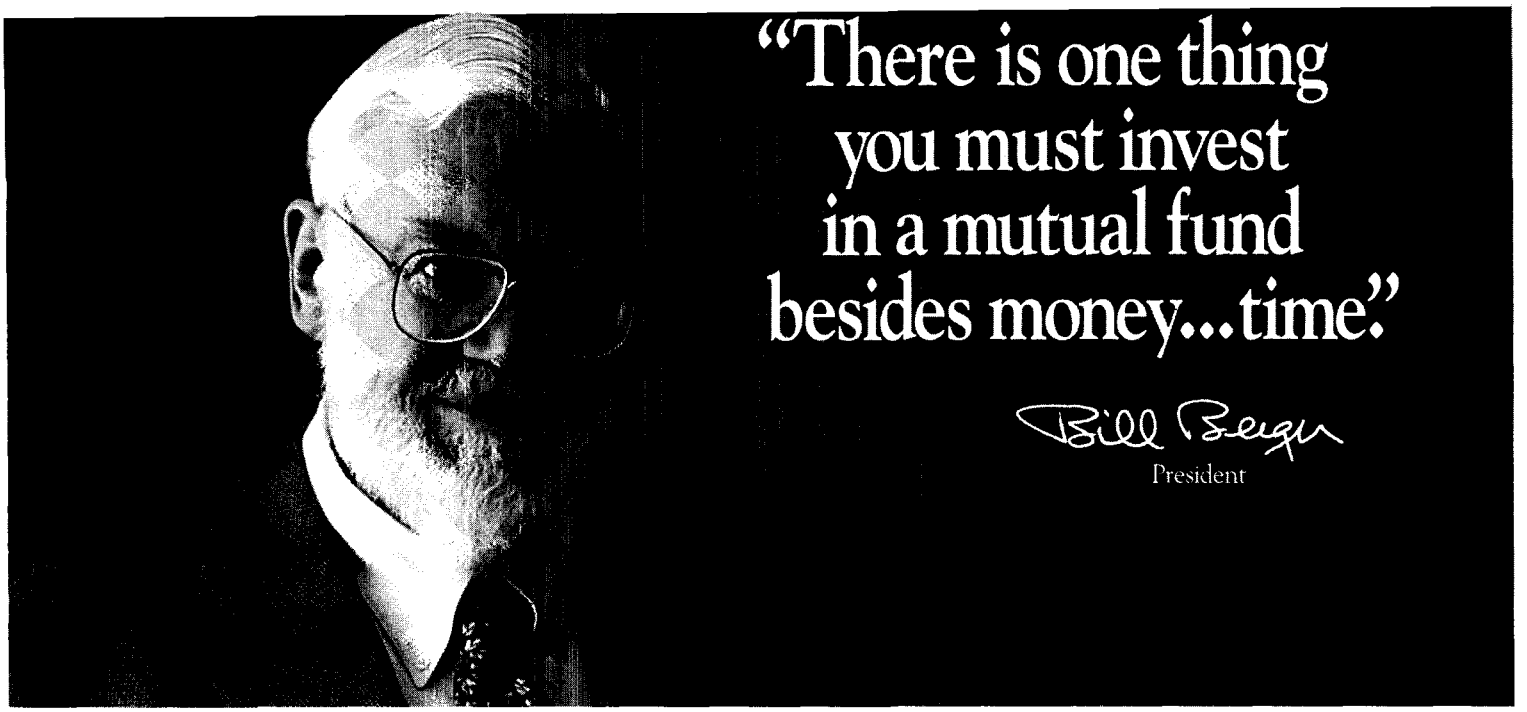

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are unable to work. But a larger group—perhaps 20 percent to 25 percent of all cases—would not be exempted. They may be slightly retarded, have some mild form of mental illness or be drug dependent. Or they may simply lack the discipline to hold down a job while managing a household with kids. In time, most of these individuals could learn to do useful work. In a harsh work-for-wages system, though, some will end up on the streets, and the state will have to take custody of their children.

If the welfare system is working properly, these failures will be "extremely rare," says the welfare task force. This, of course, is little more than a guess. Yet the task force is probably right in one sense: local officials aren't going to sit still while the evening news shows pictures of welfare mothers and their children clogging up welfare offices because they have no money for rent. In the end, there will be wholesale bending of the rules. Many mothers will be exempted from the work requirement and will go back on the rolls—and the integrity of the work requirement will evaporate.

Workfare, meanwhile, is flexible. If a welfare mother stays home with a sick child, she still gets her check. If she misses work and has no excuse, she is sanctioned, but she only loses part of her grant. As a result, many caseworkers aren't afraid to penalize recipients: in the successful programs (Riverside, California; Kenosha, Wisconsin), there are lots of sanctions.

Another problem with work-for-wages is cost. Since it provides a minimum number of hours of work along with some fringe benefits, a work-for-wages job costs about $2,000 per year more than a workfare job, according to the administration—and that's not counting the foster care expenses incurred when a welfare mother is dropped from the rolls and the state has to care for her kids. Thus we can afford to fund fewer jobs—a problem for the president, since his plan mandates that anyone remaining on welfare after two years must go to work. If there aren't enough jobs, lines will form, recipients will be told to go home and wait, and the word will spread that the work requirement is a myth.

Yes, workfare has its flaws. The penalty for nonparticipation—only $40 to $70 per month in most states—should be increased, as the American Public Welfare Association recently recommended. Also, there is the potential for abuse. Welfare offices don't have the staff to check out every recipient who says she missed work because the car broke down. And the sanctioning process is so consumed by due process requirements that months can pass before a recipient's grant is reduced.

Yet nothing about today's welfare system is perfect. About all we can hope for are arrangements that work—and workfare works. We have more than ten years of experience with it, whereas work-for-wages is untested. Work-for-wages sounds tougher, but history is littered with examples of tough-sounding reforms that failed to meet expectations because the government didn't appropriate the necessary resources or because, when push came to shove, society wouldn't come down hard on mothers of young children.

Workfare requires welfare mothers to work in return for their welfare checks; it does so in a manner considered fair by those participating in it; and it's cheaper than the alternative, which means we're more likely to afford it. If we're serious about an employment-based reform strategy, we're going to need every proven tool at our disposal—even one championed by Ronald Reagan.

PAUL OFFNER is a legislative aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The views expressed here are his own.

SOFIA POSTCARD

HAVE A NICE DAY

By Slavenka Drakulić

She wore a semitransparent white shirt, and underneath I could detect her fine lace bra. When she leaned toward me to take my passport, I could tell she was using good perfume, too. She had a modern haircut and spoke proper English. Yet, while I watched her standing behind the reception desk at the Sheraton, I felt awkward. There was a strange, unfriendly air about her. She answered my questions brusquely, almost impolitely, as if information were a gift, dependent on her goodwill, and not part of her job. *And she did not smile.* This was a sure sign that I was in Sofia.

Here, receptionists, bell-captains, elevator operators and waitresses do not smile, not even for $260 per night, which is what one pays for a room at the elegant, marble-halled Sofia Sheraton. The staff seems too proud to smile, indicating to guests (who already feel foolish paying for something they don't get) that: "Yes, we are here for you, but you won't see our smiles, because they are priceless." They look as if they have never heard of courtesy. Above all, they look as if nobody ever told them that they are there to *serve.*

The Sheraton is not an exception. When I entered the Austrian Airlines office on Maria Luiza Boulevard, the two young women there barely lifted their eyes. Instead of answering my question, one just shrugged and continued to talk on the telephone: "Really? And then? What did he say?..." After waiting half an hour, I got the wrong ticket. I left without receiving an apology; the person was even angry with me for not taking the incorrect ticket! Needless to say, not for a moment did I detect the trace of a smile on any member of the staff.

At the Pirogov hospital, where I went for a medical test, a woman in the laboratory started to shout at me as

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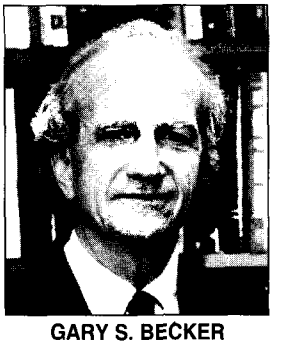
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soon as I opened the door. Accustomed to that sort of treatment in Yugoslavia, where I grew up, I waited for her to calm down. When I finally had a chance to explain to her what I needed and why, and when she realized that I was a foreigner, she decided to take pity on me—which, of course, is nothing but the other side of power. The point is: there was no difference in attitude toward me as a guest, a customer or a patient. People acted as if I was at their mercy. In any case, they certainly did not bother to be polite.

But how, in truth, could they have learned differently? Where would they have seen a smile? Living among grim faces tinted by the drabness of daily hardships, they had no chance of knowing another way, much less changing overnight. Did they even recognize the need to change?

I remember my first flight to the United States in 1983—and I remember it because of a single episode. As we landed at JFK, a stewardess thanked us for flying Pan Am—which was strange enough to my ears—and then she said: "We are proud to serve you." Her sentence struck me. Proud? How could anyone be proud to *serve*? It was a kind of cultural shock to me. I was not accustomed to the word "serve" having a positive meaning. In my Eastern European vocabulary, it could only mean something bad: servitude, slavery, humiliation.

There was another cultural shock. On my first morning, when I went to a bakery, the woman behind the counter smiled and said: "So, how are you today?" I stood there, confused for a moment. "I'm a bit tired, I have jet lag," I answered, but before I could finish she had already asked the next person the same thing. She clearly had no intention of waiting for my answer. I felt embarrassed. I was still not quite conscious that I was confronted with a code of communication that had nothing to do with her interest, the truth or my real feelings. The only proper and expected answer, I soon learned, was: "Thanks, I'm O.K." But even this felt so much better than the suspicious, unfriendly expressions on the faces of salespersons in my part of the world. So, when another woman greeted me with a smiling "Have a nice day!"—I smiled back and said, "You, too!" I suddenly realized that this sort of smile is important, and that it looks nice as well.

Sofia is a good place to observe the clash of the capitalist and Communist worlds. In the last three years the city has changed its face. It is booming with a new spirit of free enterprise. There are many new privately owned shops for food, clothes and electronic goods. But these businesses are not competing for customers. Even the street vendors have not yet discovered the trick of charming people into buying a pencil, a chocolate or a banana. They look at you as if your only aim in life is to steal their banana. Perhaps they don't need to try so hard, since people here are hungry for everything new and Western. Also, if you keep in mind that until recently one had to bribe a salesperson to get a decent piece of meat or a pair of good shoes, the attitude of consumers and sellers is understandable, if hard to stand.

But the reasons go deeper. In this ex-Communist country there is capitalism, but not the comprehension of it. Call it facade-capitalism. Take, for example, the principle that a customer is always right for the simple reason that he has money. Here the logic of employees is just the opposite: "Don't for a moment think that you are better than us because you have money! And if you have money—we have our pride." Capitalism is a confusing new process. It is confusing because everyone has to work hard, and yet only a few will get rich. It is confusing because it does not guarantee you a job, or security, or medical care, or a pension. The idea of social justice, even if it means no more than poverty for everyone, is still present, if not in politics, then in the collective psyche. People are not used to the fact that someone has money, and they react with aggression and contempt, laying bare a conflict between a new economy and the old Communist moral values.

If I go back to our education, to our textbooks with fat capitalists and starving workers, to our lessons in Marxism on class exploitation, then I can see where this *non-smiling* culture comes from. The liberated Communist working class has its pride; serving someone is not part of the ideology. This, plus egalitarianism, makes one understand that *serving* cannot be part of the code of communication here. Indeed, it could mean *humiliation.*

The same goes for a smile. You can wander from a shop to a hotel to a restaurant to a café—private or not, doesn't really matter—and have as much chance of finding a smile as you would of striking gold. The reason? Not so long ago, a smile could provoke distrust. Why is that person smiling? Does it mean that he or she is happy? And how is it possible, with all this misery around us? To show happiness was a provocation, a reason for suspicion. If under communism everyone was unhappy, then it follows that no one would be smiling. It is logical, too, that smiling would not be a part of one's profession. In Sofia, I became aware that what we call habits or social customs, under the new circumstances, reveal crucial misunderstandings, even signs of a culture clash. To overcome them, the former Communist world needs more than the introduction of a free-market economy, of private initiative or even democracy. When I go to Sofia again, and see a smile, that for me will be a real token of change.

Leaving Sofia, I took a taxi to the airport. The driver of the old Lada did not even look at me. He muttered the price with a cigarette hanging from his mouth. The car was vibrating from loud disco music; his C.B. line was open, constantly transmitting static. But I did not say a word. I did not dare. His message was: "This is my car, and I do what I please. Is that clear?"

"Yes," I thought. "Yes, Mr. Taxi Driver, I got ya!"

SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ, a Croatian writer, is author of the novel *Marble Skin* (W. W. Norton).

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Standards in Ohio

We say, in this country, that we are all in favor of tough education standards, but are we really serious? Not if the recent challenge of the Ohio high school exit exams by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is any indication.

The Ohio exams, which are designed to make sure that all graduating seniors have at least minimum competency in reading, writing, math and citizenship, were part of an education reform package that passed in 1987. But to make sure that students and schools knew about the tests and had time to prepare for them, linking the diploma to passing the tests was deferred until this year.

Now, however, OCR is raising the issue of fairness. Their challenge is based on the fact that approximately 90 percent of white students had passed all four tests as of March 1, but only about 80 percent of African-American students had done so. (As of May 1, the numbers of students passing had increased to 95 percent of white seniors and 88 to 90 percent of African-American seniors, but the agency continued its investigation.)

The tests are not tough. They were designed to measure proficiencies that students are supposed to attain by the end of eighth grade. And most students did not find them hard. When OCR issued its challenge, 99 percent of all seniors, both black and white, had already passed the writing test, and 99 percent of white seniors and 98 percent of black seniors had passed the reading test. However, there was a gap of 5 percentage points between passing rates of black and white students in the citizenship test and a 15-point gap in math. OCR does not allege that the tests themselves are biased; rather that a presumption of bias exists because minority youngsters had a higher failure rate. And their apparent explanation is that these kids were not given a fair and adequate opportunity to learn the material.

But does the fact that a student didn't learn something prove it wasn't taught—or taught adequately? When do kids themselves become responsible for what they learn or fail to learn? The youngsters who are now looking at the possibility of not graduating have had *eight* chances to take and pass the tests, beginning at the end of eighth grade—and they'll get a ninth this month. In Cleveland, where there was a big concentration of African-American students who failed early attempts to pass the exams, the school district ran remedial summer sessions. Only about 10 percent of the kids who had failed showed up at the first session. Last summer, kids who had failed were *paid* to come to summer school—and the ones who did made progress, but many did not bother.

The Ohio tests were designed to measure proficiencies that students are supposed to attain by the end of eighth grade. And most students did not find them hard.

Apparently many of these kids were not very serious about attending school during the year, either. The Ohio Department of Education, in defending its exit exams, says that the kids who are in danger of not graduating missed, on average, 32 days during their junior year of high school—that's over six weeks. A quarter of them missed 45 days, or nine weeks. How many of them would have passed if they had made it to school more regularly?

It's not clear exactly what remedy OCR will seek if it decides the allegations of bias are correct. The tests could be thrown out altogether or made optional, or linking them to graduation could be put off for several more years. The message any of these "remedies" will send to kids who didn't bother to learn the material, or even come to school, is clear: Despite all the talk of standards and getting tough, there are no consequences for failing to pass the exit exams. The kids who couldn't be bothered will get their diploma along with the rest. And the ones who failed the first or second or third time but worked hard and finally made it will get the message that they're chumps.

With the Goals 2000 legislation, the federal government made a promising start towards setting high standards for all our students and helping them meet these standards. The point of the OCR challenge seems to be that if some kids can't pass a test after seven or eight tries—a test that an overwhelming majority of students have passed—the schools are not yet perfect enough for us to risk standards for youngsters. This is a giant step backwards. What can we expect now? Will the federal government work to create and uphold standards or to destroy them?

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1994 by Albert Shanker.

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DASCHLE'S DASH

By Weston Kosova

At about noon on March 4, a few hours before he announced he was retiring from the Senate, Majority Leader George Mitchell put in a call to Tom Daschle. "He just wanted to let me know his plans," Daschle says. Daschle was on Mitchell's heads-up list for good reason. As co-chair with Mitchell of the Senate Democratic Policy Committee, the South Dakota Democrat is one of Mitchell's closest allies. Even so, Mitchell's decision "came as a complete surprise," Daschle says. "I fully expected him to run for another term."

But if Mitchell's news caught Daschle unaware, it didn't quite catch him unprepared. Almost immediately after Mitchell's withdrawal, Daschle began working the phones, quietly lining up support for his own campaign to take over the leader's post. "He didn't waste any time," says one Senate Democrat. "Tom approached me, what was it, four, five days after Mitchell's announcement."

As far as Daschle is concerned, there wasn't any time to waste. At 46, the soft-spoken, unabashedly ambitious Midwesterner had waited more than twenty years for this moment. Indeed, Daschle has spent his political lifetime mapping his ascent through the Democratic hierarchy in anticipation of the leader's chair, demonstrating an unfailing skill for being in just the right place at just the right time, nurturing friendships with powerful members who taught him the value of political favors and eased his way up the Democratic ladder.

Daschle found his first tutor in James Abourezk. The two met in 1969, when Abourezk was a candidate for attorney general in South Dakota and Daschle was president of the South Dakota State University Young Democrats. (Daschle was Clintonesque in his adolescent political desires. "People would ask what's your dream, what's your ambition?" Daschle says of his high school days in Nashville. "And I can recall saying, well, my dream is someday to be a U.S. Senator.") After college and the Air Force, Daschle came to Washington as an assistant for Abourezk, who won election to the Senate in 1972. Daschle quickly mastered Senate rules and procedures, and was especially mindful of the way power flowed. "Tom knew what doors went where," says one Democrat.

Six years later Daschle gathered up his Hill experience and, with Abourezk's support, ran for a House seat in eastern South Dakota's first district. He won by fourteen votes. (An eight-month-long recount upped the tally to 139.) Daschle soon befriended Representative Morris Udall of Arizona, who encouraged him to run as regional whip, a low-ranking spot in the leadership. For Udall, the regional chairman, Daschle was an obvious choice; Daschle had worked on the Arizonan's 1976 presidential campaign.

TOM DASCHLE BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Udall refined the young freshman's (Daschle was 31) already considerable schmoozing skills, instructing him in the art of massaging colleagues for votes while winning their trust. He also taught him how to play up a connection. "You should just go to the offices of the congressmen in our region, tell them you're running, tell them I support you and ask them for their vote," Daschle recalls Udall telling him. Daschle also won election as president of his freshman class and finessed a spot on the House leadership steering committee.

It was at an early meeting of that committee that Daschle formed a fast friendship with another powerful House member, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski. "Danny and I just happened to sit next to each other for the first couple of times and got to know one another," Daschle says. "I think because he was looking for allies and because I think I was ready from the beginning to work with him, he befriended me." Daschle forged similar alliances with

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other House higher-ups: Tony Coelho, Richard Gephardt, Tip O'Neill. As a member of the Agriculture Committee, Daschle concentrated his legislative efforts on protecting his rural constituents, winning points for his farm-credit bills. But as a budding member of the leadership, he seemed more interested in making connections than in making legislation.

After four terms in the House Daschle won a Senate seat in 1986 and immediately endorsed Robert Byrd against Bennett Johnston for majority leader. Daschle didn't know either man well, but recalled that his old boss Abourezk was a Byrd ally. Once again, he was cementing relationships quickly. "I just decided that I would say yes to Byrd early and allow him to use my name in any way he wanted to," he says. Byrd didn't forget his loyalty. When Daschle set his sights on the Finance Committee, Byrd smoothed the way.

In 1988 Byrd stepped down as majority leader and, once again, Daschle threw his support behind the right man. In openly backing George Mitchell over Bennett Johnston and Daniel Inouye, he won Mitchell's gratitude. Mitchell proved to be Daschle's most influential political helpmate, creating a special co-chairman position for him on the policy committee, a high-profile perch from which he could survey the political landscape. When Mitchell decided to step down, Daschle saw his opportunity.

Daschle announced for the job on March 23. For several weeks it looked like he might be the only candidate, as prospect after prospect failed to take up the challenge. John Breaux, the chief deputy Democratic whip, removed himself from contention after he decided he couldn't muster the votes. Wendell Ford, the Senate's second-ranking Democrat, also pulled out after "long and meaningful reflection." So did Patrick Leahy, who said his "heart wasn't in it," and Harry Reid, who threw his support to Daschle. Budget Committee Chairman Jim Sasser of Tennessee finally made it a contest when he sent out an announcement letter on April 21.

But don't expect much in the way of ideological fireworks from a Sasser-Daschle matchup. Both are quiet, well-respected liberals. And the two men like each other (they once spent an afternoon cruising the Chesapeake Bay in John Glenn's motor boat). Sasser has an edge in age and experience: eleven years Daschle's senior and a powerful committee chairman in his third term, he may appeal to older senators who point out that Daschle, who chairs no committee (he heads Finance and Agriculture subcommittees), has never had to choreograph the passage of a major piece of legislation. Sasser may also have an edge among Southern senators.

Already the lines of allegiance are forming. Though a new leader won't be picked until after the November elections, Daschle claims he has locked up twenty of the twenty-eight votes he'll need to win, including those of Byron Dorgan, Bob Graham, Jay Rockefeller, Kent Conrad, Bob Kerrey, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Harris Wofford and Reid.

Sasser, meanwhile, is playing a more discreet game. "He, like most of the older ones here, thinks this is really inside baseball, and shouldn't get into it," says a Senate aide close to Sasser. "And if he talks to the press, then we get into the questions of who's in his camp. His colleagues don't want their names bandied about." That said, he speculates that Sasser "probably has got commitments from between fifteen and twenty," among them Dale Bumpers, Paul Sarbanes, Joe Biden, Paul Wellstone and Glenn. Mitchell is staying neutral. If Sasser prefers to keep quiet, however, Daschle, the journeyman political angler, couldn't resist at least one public gesture on his opponent's behalf. After Sasser, who is up for re-election this year, announced his bid for leader, Daschle offered to campaign for him. "I thought somebody might think that was kind of an unusual situation: Jim Sasser's opponent is there campaigning for him," Daschle smiles. So far, he hasn't heard back. •

The minimum wage and welfare reform.

TAKE A HIKE

By Stephanie Mencimer

As the welfare reform debate has heated up, Washington has been abuzz with discussion about how government can make work more attractive than welfare. To this end, the Clinton administration has offered up health care reform, the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit and the subsidizing of low-wage, private-sector jobs. But of all the options for "making work pay," the best seems to be the one they aren't talking about—raising the minimum wage.

The paltry purchasing power of the minimum wage today is poor incentive to slave long hours in the grease pits of the nation's fast food industry. Between 1979 and 1989, the real value of the minimum wage dropped 31 percent. While the 1991 raise to $4.25 per hour was an improvement, to have the same purchasing power as in the 1970s, the minimum wage would today need to be $5.42.

Although candidate Clinton argued for an increase in the minimum wage, today there is an unspoken understanding among even the most committed anti-poverty wonks that raising the minimum wage is politically unpalatable in the face of impending health care mandates on business. This position is defended with the argument that raising the minimum wage would eliminate jobs. But like many economic sacred cows, the old maxim ain't necessarily so.

While the federal minimum remained frozen during the 1980s, many states raised wages independently. Researchers took the opportunity to actually test the job

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loss theory in the real world, using as a control group states that didn't raise wages. One such researcher is Lawrence Katz, the Labor Department's chief economist. With Princeton economist David Card, Katz studied the effects of the 1991 federal minimum wage hike on the fast food industry in all fifty states. When the two compared the effects of the national wage increase on states with lower minimums to states with higher wage floors, they found strangely counterintuitive results: states that had the largest increase in wages also showed the greatest increase in employment.

Katz and his "new view" economics were about as well-received by conservatives as supply-siders were among liberals in the 1980s. Yet the results of his research have since been replicated in other studies. David Card examined the effects of a 1992 wage hike in New Jersey that raised the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.05 per hour—in the middle of an economic slump. As Katz found in another study in Texas, and as Card found earlier in California, when the minimum went up, employment in fast food actually increased slightly among teenagers and no job loss occurred.

In trying to explain the phenomena, Card says that Burger Kings in the same zip code would often have widely different pay scales. Some stores made a policy of keeping wages low at the cost of very high employee turnover. Others raised wages above the minimum and kept full employment with low turnover. Card speculates that employment rose when the minimum wage went up because the low-wage, high turnover businesses were able to fill all their vacancies and retain workers.

By most measures, this kind of full employment is positive on all fronts. Increased productivity and lower recruiting costs are good for business, and, of course, higher wages are good for workers—especially when you consider that the average minimum wage worker contributes around 40 percent of a household's total income.

But just for argument's sake, say that raising the minimum wage eliminates some jobs. Who is most affected? Teenagers, who make up 30 percent of the minimum wage work force. Because of their short time in the labor market, in theory, they are the first to go when wages rise.

A study by economists Charles Brown, Curtis Gilroy and Andrew Kohen estimates that for every 10 percent increase in the minimum wage, teen employment is reduced by 0.6 percent, but adult workers are not affected. (Incidentally, these are the same researchers whose original study in the 1970s is often cited as "proof" that raising the minimum wage would produce drastic reductions in teen employment. This later study, done in light of better data, has been largely ignored.)

In addition, there's some truth to the old conservative argument that most minimum wage earners aren't poor. More than half of all minimum wage earners are between 16 and 24. Of those, almost one-fifth live in multiworker households with combined incomes greater than $50,000, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that only one in five minimum wage workers lives below the poverty line. The question about raising the minimum wage, then, may come down to this: Do we want to have more low-wage jobs that impoverish adult families in order to keep middle-class teenagers in high fashion?

Are the benefits of a higher minimum wage worth a political battle with the business community? If Clinton is truly committed to fighting poverty, the answer is overwhelmingly yes. Shortly before the minimum wage went up in 1991, Ronald Mincy of the Urban Institute estimated that the wage increase would bring at least 200,000 families above the poverty line, without any additional intervention by the government social service bureaucracy, AFDC benefits or new taxes.

A minimum wage increase is arguably the best complement to effective welfare reform, a reform that's meant to wean welfare dependency and reinforce the work ethic. If the minimum wage went up ninety cents (which Katz has suggested) to $5.15 per hour, people making $8,840 per year would instantly be making $10,712. That's an extra $1,800 of honest pay—not a handout, not charity and not undeserved.

The Clinton administration points to the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit as proof of its commitment to making work pay, and it is certainly a step in the right direction. But the EITC will not bring a family of three headed by a minimum wage earner above the poverty line. According to Robert Greenstein of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a minimum wage increase was intended to bridge this gap—and it was supposed to be indexed with inflation. Otherwise, the EITC will require regular increases just to maintain the status quo. To raise a family of three above the poverty line with the EITC, the minimum wage already needs to be twenty-five cents higher than it is now.

Without raising the minimum wage, further increases in the EITC for those at the bottom end of the wage scale will have to be financed by lowering the phase-out level—in effect, penalizing work at a certain income. Currently, for every dollar earned over $12,570, EITC recipients lose about eighteen cents of credit. Add in payroll taxes and loss of food stamp benefits, and EITC recipients earning between $11,000 and $28,000 lose between fifty and sixty-two cents on every dollar earned. That marginal tax rate would have to rise without any corresponding increases in the minimum wage.

There are so many good reasons to raise the minimum wage that it's worth reconsidering in light of the recent debate over welfare reform. A minimum wage increase affects business profits at most by about 3 percent, and could dramatically transform the incentives for work over welfare. In reality, Burger King doesn't lay off all its $4 per hour workers when the government tells them to pay $4.25. Someone still has to flip burgers. Clinton should help make it worth the effort.

STEPHANIE MENCIMER is a Washington writer.

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Why the answer may be yes.

CAN LABOR COME BACK?

By John B. Judis

The recent Teamsters strike, *The Los Angeles Times* declared, "has served as a reminder of how much the union's influence has waned." The outcome, *The New York Times* wrote, showed how the union's "power has shrunk." There is some truth in these statements, but they reveal more about the national press's attitude toward labor than about the Teamsters union. During the twenty-four-day strike, the longest in Teamster history and the first since 1979, the union achieved almost 100 percent support from its rank and file, in spite of violent dissension in its upper ranks. In the provisional settlement the union made concessions on the use of rail to replace trucks, but it won wage and benefit increases and halted the replacement of full-time union workers with part-time nonunion help. The deal was not a spectacular union victory, but the strike itself was a sign that the labor movement, which has slumbered for the past fifteen years, is slowly beginning to awake.

There are other signs of stirring. Although union membership steadily declined from 22 million in 1975 to 16.4 million in 1992, it actually grew last year, to 16.6 million—the first gain in fourteen years. Unions are winning strikes they would have lost a decade ago; late last year both the American Airlines flight attendants and the United Mine Workers (UMW) concluded successful actions. Workers are more receptive to joining unions. "We're walking into situations where workers are begging us to organize," says Richard Bensinger, the director of the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute, which trains union organizers. "There is a new anger when we go into the field." And a new, militant leadership has emerged atop many of the major unions.

Last fall, after the AFL-CIO's lobbying failed to block the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), there were also pronouncements that labor had lost its clout in Washington. But while the AFL-CIO couldn't buck Clinton on a treaty that may have little impact on its members—American firms were already moving to Mexico without NAFTA's encouragement—labor has gotten Clinton to cooperate on appointments and legislation that matter more.

What accounts for labor's new stirring? Workers across the spectrum have grown restive. Frustrated by two decades of falling wages, they're angered by runaway shops and corporate downsizing at companies like Zenith and Sears. Truckers' and dock workers' real wages, for instance, declined by 20 percent from 1977 to 1992. Unions, for their part, are discovering that they can organize workers they formerly ignored or gave up on. Once, union leaders assumed it was much more difficult to recruit nurses or waitresses than machinists or assembly-line workers, because service-sector workers were either professionals who disdained unions or part-time minimum wage workers who didn't stay in one job long enough to be organized. Today, union leaders have discovered it is quite possible to organize such workers, because the owners of hotels, hospitals or grocery stores can't respond to organizing drives by threatening to move their businesses elsewhere.

Unions are having their greatest success among white-collar, service and government workers. At the same time that blue-collar manufacturing unions have lost members, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) have each continued to grow. SEIU has gained 400,000 members since 1980. Since 1988 the UFCW has increased the number of unionized workers in retail grocery stores from 67 percent to 72 percent and in meat packing from 50 percent to 65 percent. The UFCW, which added 100,000 workers during the entire 1980s, added the same amount in 1993 alone. Also in 1993 AFSCME upped its membership by 22,000; it is now on the verge of displacing the Teamsters as the nation's largest union. Though some dismiss public workers as a valid group, there are now more people employed in government than in private manufacturing.

Unions themselves have developed new organizing strategies. Consider the success of Justice for Janitors, an SEIU organizing project. Two decades ago buildings began contracting out their janitorial work to nonunion businesses with work forces made up of minorities and recent immigrants, many of whom had been hired on a part-time basis. By the start of the '80s the old janitorial unions were decimated—for instance, none of Washington, D.C.'s and only 30 percent of Los Angeles's jan-

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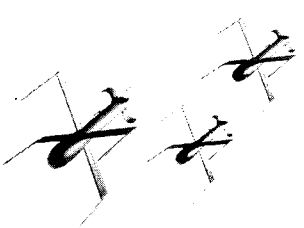
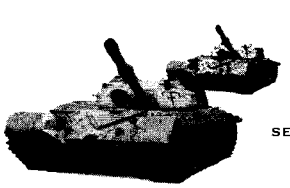
DEFENSE LEADERS AGREE FOUR CAPABILITIES WILL BE CRITICAL TO AMERICA'S SECURITY OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS.

GLOBAL REACH.
WITH BASES CLOSING OVERSEAS, LONG-RANGE AIRCRAFT LIKE THE B-2 ARE VITAL.

STANDOFF.
AS IF THE F/A-18 MULTI-ROLE FIGHTER WEREN'T VERSATILE ENOUGH, IT WILL SOON CARRY TSSAM (AGM-137), NORTHROP'S STEALTHY, STANDOFF CRUISE MISSILE.

SURVIVABILITY.
ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURES MAKE AIRCRAFT MORE SURVIVABLE. EVERY U.S. F-15E FLIES WITH NORTHROP'S AN/ALQ-135 RADAR JAMMER.





PRECISION.
ADVANCED SENSOR TECHNOLOGY HAS LED TO A BRILLIANT ANTIARMOR SUBMUNITION. BAT USES ACOUSTIC AND INFRARED SENSORS TO IDENTIFY A TARGET, THEN FIND AND DESTROY IT.

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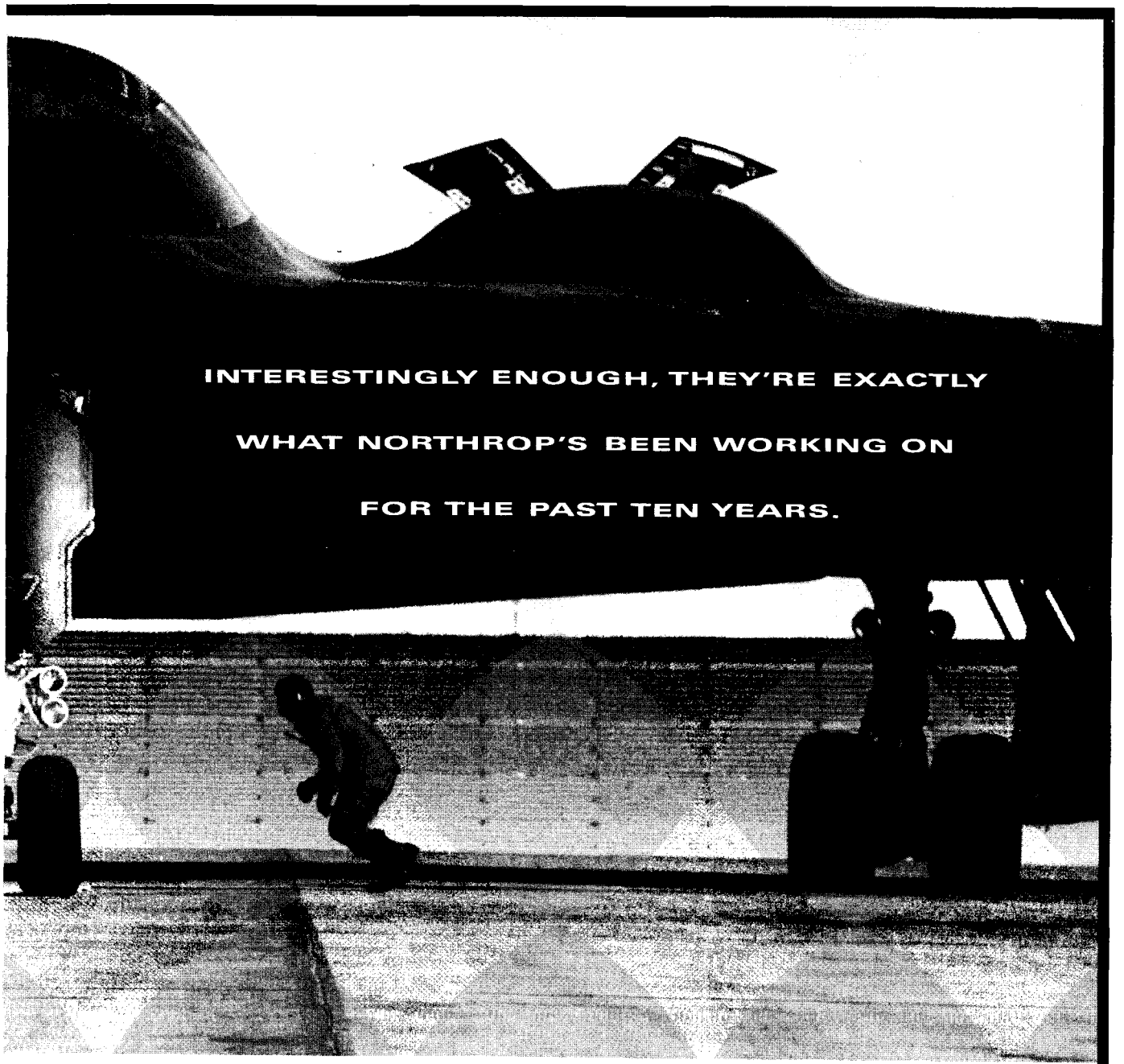

OPINIONS VARY AS TO THE FUTURE FORM OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE SHOULD TAKE. WHAT EXPERTS DO AGREE ON, HOWEVER, ARE THE NECESSARY CAPABILITIES: GLOBAL REACH, SURVIVABILITY, STANDOFF AND PRECISION. AND FOR THE PAST DECADE, NORTHROP HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON THOSE EXACT CRITERIA. THE RESULTS BEING UNPARALLELED ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN AIRCRAFT DESIGN, STEALTH TECHNOLOGY, COMPOSITES, COUNTERMEASURES AND SENSORS. FACT IS, NORTHROP HAS BEEN A LEADER IN ALL THESE AREAS OF MILITARY TECHNOLOGY FOR FIFTY YEARS. AND THAT'S ONE ASPECT OF DEFENSE THAT WON'T BE CHANGING. NORTHROP.

NORTHROP THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGIES, RIGHT NOW.

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itors were organized.

Justice for Janitors, founded in 1987, has reversed that trend. The union introduced a strategy, borrowed from the industrial unions of the '30s, of seeking area-wide contracts with building owners regardless of which janitorial service they hired to do their cleaning. Instead of seeking supervised elections through the National Labor Relations Board, which employers can thwart through court appeals, Justice for Janitors forced the building owners to negotiate directly with the unions. And they used '60s-style sit-downs and demonstrations to embarrass building owners, many of whom were prominent in local politics. "What we are doing is sort of back to the future," says Justice for Janitors co-founder Steve Lerner. Today, 40 percent of D.C.'s janitors and 90 percent of L.A.'s janitors are organized—thanks to Justice for Janitors.

Some of labor's revival has to do with new leaders who have emerged in the last fifteen years. In contrast to the generation that reigned after World War II, these leaders are more focused on organizing new members rather than simply meeting the needs of the old. In 1982 Richard Trumka was elected president of the UMW against a slate that threatened to take the union back to the dark days of W. A. "Tony" Boyle, when dues were squandered and dissidents were murdered. Trumka, a coal miner with a law degree, has since been twice re-elected. Last year he led a successful seven-month strike against the large companies of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association. The strategy that Trumka followed may set a trend for future labor actions: it combined old-style militancy with a willingness to set up a joint labor-management program in the coal fields. The miners call it a "get along" program.

Then there are the Teamsters. Two years ago, in a government-supervised vote, former UPS driver Ron Carey took over the 1.4 million-member union, which was controlled by organized crime. During the strike the press made much of Carey's personal real estate holdings—a common way in which better-paid blue-collar workers invest their earnings and inheritance—but failed to uncover any evidence of corruption. Indeed, Carey appears to have struggled valiantly to reform the Teamsters, which are still plagued by fierce factionalism and by the remnants of the old regime. It was remarkable that he was able to lead a nationwide strike—the largest in the United States since 1986—in the face of vocal rebellion.

Other unions have also undergone dramatic changes. In 1991 delegates from the Transportation Communications International Union (TCU), which organizes railroad and airline workers, threw out their longtime leaders, whom they charged with paying more attention to their own needs than to their members' needs. The union's new president, Bob Scardelletti, shuns the Washington luncheon circuit for meetings with the union's rank and file. This year the UFCW ousted its president, William Wynn, who faced charges of union fund misuse, and elected Doug Dority, a former grocery clerk, who headed the union's highly successful organizing drives during the '80s.

Unions also have found unexpected support from a group of liberal and left-wing intellectuals—many of them associated with the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), an eight-year-old Washington think tank. These economists and sociologists represent a dissenting current within the broader left. Since the '60s, most left-wing academics have gravitated toward more fashionable concerns with racial and sexual inequality or Third World underdevelopment. Those who have professed an interest in labor generally have seen the movement as an instrument of revolution, weakened by a cadre of industrial quislings.

The dissenters concern themselves with the actual function of unions and with the evolving relations between business and labor. Some of them, such as Barry Bluestone of the University of Massachusetts or Brian Turner of Washington's Institute for Work and Technology, are children of union officials; others, such as the University of California's Harley Shaiken, are veterans of the assembly line. They include Richard Freeman of Harvard (co-author of the landmark *What Do Unions Do?*), Bennett Harrison of Carnegie-Mellon, Paula Voos, the chair of the University of Wisconsin's department of industrial relations, and several Clinton administration officials, among them Labor Department Chief Economist Lawrence Katz, Labor Secretary Robert Reich and Council of Economic Advisers Chair Laura Tyson.

These intellectuals generally recognize that unions can't content themselves simply with getting the best deal for their members; unions also have to worry about helping companies compete effectively. Freeman, Bluestone, Turner and others argue that new forms of labor/management cooperation can protect worker rights and raise firms' productivity, as has already happened in Japan and Western Europe and is happening now at Corning Glass, General Motors's Saturn division and U.S. West's Home and Personal Services division. Within the labor movement they promote a subtle interplay between militance and cooperation. And their vision of America bears far more resemblance to progressive era industrial democracy than to Marxian socialism.

This strategy of fostering higher productivity through labor/management cooperation is still opposed by some union leaders, including the Teamsters' Carey and Moe Biller of the Postal Workers. But in the last decade leaders of several major unions, including the United Auto Workers, United Steel Workers and the Communications Workers of America, have embraced it and the intellectuals who have espoused it.

Labor is also getting a boost from the Clinton administration. Clinton, the former governor of a right-to-work state, has never expressed the same kind of affection for the labor movement that he has for the civil rights or women's movements, but he knows that labor

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is an important part of his political coalition. Clinton has made pro-labor appointments to government agencies, and his administration has consulted closely with unions on relevant legislation (welfare reform, national service, health care). "Our experience has been the absolute opposite of [what it was with] Reagan and Bush," says AFSCME President Gerald McEntee. "With these people, we have input and influence."

Ideally, labor officials would have wanted one of their own as secretary of labor, but they realize that Reich makes up for in clout with the president what he lacks in union loyalty. And labor's new leaders like Reich. Says Trumka, "I didn't have doubts about Reich. I was on the board of EPI with him, so I knew him pretty well." Union leaders have also been pleasantly surprised by Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña.

Below the Cabinet level, Clinton's top picks include Stanford Law Professor William Gould, who is the new chairman of the NLRB, and Fred Feinstein, ex-counsel to the House Labor and Education Committee, who is the NLRB's chief counsel. Both strongly favor reforming labor law to make it harder for employers to intimidate union organizers. Clinton and Peña tapped Ernie Dubester, the AFL-CIO's rail lobbyist, and Magdalena Jacobsen, the labor relations aide to former San Francisco mayor Art Agnos, to fill the seats on the National Mediation Board, which mediates labor disputes in the railroad and airline industries. The rail unions, who went five years without a contract under Reagan and Bush appointees, were ecstatic about Clinton's choices.

On the legislative front, Clinton has endorsed a bill that would end the use of replacement workers during strikes and another that would strengthen worker health and safety rules. Reich and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown have appointed a Commission for the Future of Worker-Management Relations charged with proposing changes in labor law. Reich stacked the commission with pro-labor academics, including Freeman, Gould, Voos, former labor secretaries Ray Marshall and John Dunlop (the commission's chair), ex-UAW president Douglas Fraser and ex-Xerox president Paul Allaire. Some labor officials worry that the commission is so friendly with the unions that it won't be able to formulate a reform bill that business can accept.

Clinton and Reich have sent several other pro-labor signals as well: removing Reagan's ban on hiring the air-traffic controllers fired during the 1981 PATCO strike; rescinding Bush administration strictures on construction unions; limiting government enforcement of the court decision allowing union workers to demand back money spent for union political activity; intervening personally and forcefully to settle the American Airlines flight attendants' strike; and playing a quiet role in helping conclude the mine workers' strike.

The rise of new leadership and a new intelligentsia, a sympathetic administration, growing anger in the workplace—all these suggest that labor may be on the verge of the kind of breakthrough that took place in the '30s, when union membership doubled in four years. Yet some of the same factors that contributed to labor's subsequent decline still exist.

One major problem is business hostility to unions. Labor's seventeen-year decline in membership was caused primarily by a concerted business offensive that began in the early '70s and still has not abated. Threatened by competition from abroad and by overcapacity in many industries, corporate managers have aggressively fought unionization and have even attempted to decertify existing unions. They have used the threat of moving jobs overseas to intimidate workers who want to form unions; they have hired anti-union consultants to contest representation elections; and they have sometimes refused to sign contracts with unions—even when they have lost union elections.

Many of their tactics violate existing labor law. In 1957 the NLRB ordered the reinstatement of 922 workers fired illegally for organizing a union; in 1980 more than 10,000 workers were reinstated. Yet the penalties for breaking the law are minimal. If the board finds a company guilty, the company has to reinstate the worker and pay his or her back wages—minus whatever the worker has earned from another job.

Since 1977 the AFL-CIO has tried to get Congress to raise the price companies pay for intimidating organizers and ignoring election results, but Republican senators have opposed reform, and labor has fallen short of the sixty votes needed to end a filibuster. With only fifty-six Democratic senators, labor still doesn't have the votes and probably won't get them even when the Dunlop Commission presents its reform recommendations next year. And until the unions are able to get Congress to reform the labor laws, companies will frustrate union organizing.

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West of Eden

Why does the United States, even in recovery, seem to become more of a trailer park? We close down more boutiques. Open up more Super-Ks. Wages fall. We downsize. Workers shoot each other. We have cameras in Wal-Marts to see who fires first. We depend on the Third World to pull us out of recession.

About 18 percent, or almost one out of five U.S. jobs, pay *below* the "poverty line," or *under* $12,999 a year. And as we spit out more of these jobs, and as people jam into secondhand stores, we worry about the economy "overheating."

To my horror, I just agreed to a contract for some cork workers. (Remember? People in factories?) Eight dollars an hour. Five years. With no chance for a raise. Well, 2 percent in the *sixth* year. The CEO said they were paying health insurance, so that was enough.

I begged: "How about a wage reopener for a big productivity increase?"

"No."

"Any formula you like? You pick it?"

"No. We're not interested."

Then the CEO leaned over and said: "I'm counting on you to sell this to these people."

The "people," to their credit, voted it down twice. But we kept making them vote.

I didn't show up at any of the contract votes, since they probably think I'm on the take. Also, it hurts to look at the Polish women, sitting together against the wall, who came here for a better life. Think they're in for a surprise, in 1999, when the average wage in Poland surpasses ours?

But it's not just other people's wages' falling that bothers me. It's my own. *The New York Times* reports that college-educated white males ages 46 to 55 can expect to see a decline in their incomes over the next ten years. I worry when I drive down Clybourn Avenue, which used to be a row of factories, then turned into a row of restaurants with names like Coco-Rico. I worry now if there are enough of us, professional white males, to keep these places going. I almost feel a moral obligation to go out to dinner every night.

Of late, I have read many articles about the economic crisis in Germany. "The party's over," *The Washington Post* trumpets. And why is the party over? Because this year, at $20 to $26 an hour, German workers are getting a pay raise of only 1 to 2 percent! And some of them may, sometimes, have to work on a Saturday afternoon. (How many of us would smash Nancy Kerrigan's knee to work on Saturdays at this kind of wage?)

I know how the stories get written. The Europeans are such crybabies. They love to whine over little nicks in their standard of living that no American now would even feel.

For ten years I stayed out of Western Europe because I thought the opulence would be torment. But *Forbes* and *The Wall Street Journal* tricked me into going, saying it had collapsed.

One of the amazing stories of our times is that Americans go over there, from Milan to Stockholm, walk around, then come back here . . . and what? By all historical precedent (e.g., Jesuits going to China, the opening of Japan), there should be some kind of mass dropping of jaws. As in, "My God, have you been there? It's *really* nice."

But if anyone thinks this, it is cordoned off in the travel section, and the only thing that gets on the business page is: "The Europeans have problems. Look at their unemployment."

To all of this, *Forbes*, *Fortune* et al., I'd love to reply, like Dr. Johnson kicking the rock, "I refute it thus."

Just go and look. Stay at the Hotel Europa. Ruffle the pink pages of *The Financial Times*. Check out the chemicals industries, the printing, the textiles. The incinerators are twenty years ahead of ours. Even the cappuccino machines seem to have computers. I still have the haunting memory of my first morning in Zurich. Between a perfumery and a boutique, I stumbled into a bookstore. Inside, every cover was white, as if to make a fashion statement. The clerk, in white, seemed to come from *Elle*. I asked her if there were any books in English.

"No," she smiled. "Here we sell only . . . German philosophy."

"Oh."

She smiled again.

As I fled, I could hear Schopenhauer in the back splashing on cologne.

Why can't we live like this?

Because unlike the Germans, the Swiss, etc., we have a public policy of pushing wages down. We fire people who try to join unions, who want to live their lives as Europeans do, i.e., as works of art. That's why people like me sign contracts for cork workers at $8 an hour. I hear Democrats talking constantly about "creating" new high-wage jobs. But I have never, in my adult lifetime, heard any national Democrat say: let's just jack up the wages on the jobs we already have.

No, that's not fair. I take it back. During the NAFTA debate with Ross Perot, Al Gore said, roughly: "We have an arrangement with the Mexicans that if their productivity goes up, they're going to raise people's wages." Did you hear that, too? Hey, how about an "arrangement" like that here?

Maybe Gore could meet our own CEOs and threaten some trade sanctions? One of them was telling me why he couldn't tie wages to productivity. "We have to be competitive abroad."

I looked out the window and thought of the woman in white back in Zurich, at $26 an hour, saying, "Oh, we sell only German philosophy."

I know damn well why we have to be competitive abroad. Because no one here has any money to buy anything. That's why our widget-makers in Idaho are scrambling to sell in Zaire. We took our most precious national treasure, which was our market, our beautiful, high-wage, internal market, and like a madman with a Michelangelo, we took a razor to it and slashed it.

For twenty years we have tried to do without unions. And we can't. We can cry. We can curse. We can try out New Paradigms. And read books by New Democrats. But in the end it will do no good. Without a public policy for raising the standard of living, we'll be stuck like this forever. Game over.

Back during the New Deal we started a policy, a kind of shock therapy, for raising the standard of living. We pushed people's wages up. Slowly, yes. Moderately, but up. With national agreements and White House mediation, we set the cost of labor, just as we set the cost of capital with the Federal Reserve. And to get rid of this structure made no more sense than it would to get rid of our central bank.

Isn't it time we crawled back, on our hands and knees, to the policies of the New Deal? By raising wages across the board, we could do the two things we once did in our golden age:

(1) We would not merely "stimulate" demand but we could re-create our old, ravenous, U.S. mass market: not just for "more" things, but for new and better things. Why does Bill Clinton lunge halfway around the world to sign a free trade agreement with New Guinea when we have a world economy buried deep within us? Why not give our country a pay raise? Why not sign a free trade agreement with *ourselves*?

(2) By raising wages, we would create

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new, high-wage jobs. How? It's a point we learn in Economics I: when the cost of labor rises, companies invest in capital; when the cost of labor falls, companies invest in labor. When we have unions and push wages up across the board, we have an economy more like Germany's, more capital-intensive, with more manufacturing. When we get rid of unions and pattern agreements and let business escape this New Deal hammerlock, then we have an economy of jobs, jobs, jobs, under $8 an hour.

To get a sense of the U.S. economy in its golden age, try to picture FDR, with a cigarette holder and a whip, forcing business to invest in capital because the wages of the work force kept slowly and steadily rising. It wasn't very pretty. To show how bad things were back then, our productivity would rise at the rate of 4 percent per year. It was almost cruel. Why would we go back now to the barbarism of a high-wage economy? Do you know what it's like to have to borrow money from the bank, to wake up in a cold sweat at 3 a.m. wondering how you will pay it off, to have one of those "revolver loans" pressed like a pistol to your head?

I don't blame businessmen for busting unions, for wanting to get out of the clutches of the bank. I don't blame them for closing down the mills and opening up a labor-intensive, service-sector economy so they could dine off some child's minimum wage.

I don't blame them one bit. I blame the Democrats for letting them do it.

The more we busted the unions, the more the productivity growth dropped. And the more the productivity growth dropped, people in Washington at the think tanks said to themselves, "It must be those union work rules," so we busted the unions a little more.

So naturally, productivity dropped even *more*, which meant we had to do even *more* union-busting, which meant.... It was the public policy equivalent of bleeding the patient.

Aren't wages in Europe too high? At $20 to $26 an hour, maybe German wages *are* too high. But at $8 to $10 an hour, aren't ours too low? Even way too low? To set wages so low can cause far more economic wreckage than to set them a bit too high.

We look at our indexes, pat ourselves on the back and say, "Our unemployment is a few points lower than theirs." But what are we measuring? At least one-fifth of the "jobs" that we call "jobs" aren't really jobs at all by European standards. If we stopped equating Europe's golden apples with some of our poison ivy, then our real jobless rate, by European standards, is more like 30 percent. By their standards, we're in a depression—our jobless being not just our "poor" but that $6-an-hour chunk of our "middle class."

How high, then, should we raise our wages? I've been working on a speech for Clinton to deliver. The idea came to me when I was in Europe talking to a German judge, who was moaning about all the problems in Germany. The worst problem, he said, is how the right-wing Germans, like Kohl and his allies, were slashing the level of German unemployment benefits.

"You probably don't know this in America, but recently they have slashed it, just cut it, to *67 percent!*"

"Of the hourly wage?" I stammered.

"Yes!" he said. "Did you *know*?"

"I... well," I gasped, "no, I hadn't heard. That's terrible." (I don't know what I said, really.)

At that moment, I saw Clinton, rising to address the country:

"My fellow Americans. Tonight I declare as a goal for this country raising our hourly wage to the level of a German unemployment benefit. This is not something we can achieve in the short run. Nor will it be easy. But we have to have the courage to change."

His polls rise overnight.

The next morning the market crashes.

I don't mean to be flip about the "crisis" in Germany. But a high-wage economy like Germany's is always going to be in a crisis of this kind. The whole point of a high-wage economy, in a way, is to force such a crisis, to force people to innovate or die.

Indeed, as a labor lawyer, I thought that the Germans, the Central Europeans, had gone too far with higher wages and shorter hours. Personally, if I lived in Berlin, I would probably starve, since the stores close at 6 p.m. (But maybe if I lived in Europe, I would stop behaving like an American and leave work earlier.)

At any rate, I thought that the Europeans should ease up a bit, let a few people work part-time and on Saturdays, and maybe even accept a slightly lower wage. So yes, when the Berlin Wall fell, I'd have taken a wage cut of 2 percent, but then I'm an American, and I've lost my nerve.

Over here, in a recovery, wages drop and we're paralyzed. We can't even talk about it. But because they have unions and wage policies, the Europeans can debate, down to the pfennig, exactly what their wages can be. The United States has no such policy. We lack, altogether, any kind of structure of bargaining.

What is depressing is that a central instrument of economic policy, which we had in the New Deal and later, is *gone*. Someone has to pull it out again, like a sword out of the stone. And our young Democrats today stand around, without even the nerve to try.

Maybe the European economy did get too far ahead of itself. Or it was just the bad luck of communism exploding, like a macroeconomic car bomb that was rolled into high-wage Europe. But remember the last time the high-wage German economy was in a similar "crisis," in 1979? Back then the Reaganites called it "Euro-sclerosis." Because of high wages, Germany was through, kaput, uncompetitive. And what happened? For the next ten years, the Germans muttered, "We have to innovate, innovate," and they pushed up their wages, and worker productivity grew twice as fast as ours while the workers actually worked even fewer hours. And now once again, as *Forbes* and *Fortune* write them off, the Germans are muttering, "We've got to innovate." And ten years from now, in 2004, when they pause exhausted, even higher up the slope, to catch their breath again, what will the German wage level be? Forty-five dollars an hour?

And what will ours be? Four dollars and fifty cents?

Maybe in my dotage, like in a Henry James novel, I will encounter young women from Europe who come to the United States and say, with a little thrill in their voices, "Oh it's just like a Third World country here, isn't it?"

Or maybe I will have children of my own, and send them off to the Old World, to Central Europe, so that they can get some sense of a society that is, well, more egalitarian than the United States, and that has a sense that the standard of living will rise. Or I'll give them my old Tocqueville *Democracy in America* (in case it is out of print) and say, "When I was a little boy growing up in the 1950s, the United States was just like it was in this book," and they will open it like a fairy tale, or a book about the Crusades, read about the Old Democracy and be amazed.

TOM GEOGHEGAN is author of *Which Side Are You On? Trying to Be for Labor When It's Flat on Its Back* (Plume).

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A second problem for the movement is a national leadership vacuum that holds back its growth. Like his predecessor, George Meany, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland conceives of the federation as a kind of city-state—a labor Vatican rather than the center of a social movement. While Kirkland deserves credit for bringing the UAW, the UMW and the Teamsters back into the federation, he has devoted his attention primarily to establishing the AFL-CIO as a player in Washington politics, while leaving the task of organizing the unorganized to the federation's affiliates. Incredibly, the federation continues to spend more money on foreign policy ventures than on organizing.

Some unions, including Justice for Janitors and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, have successfully augmented organizing drives with a confrontational and participatory style of public politics, but Kirkland and the federation are wedded to a conventional model of lobbying and electioneering. "They don't have a clue about what is involved in a grass-roots campaign," says a former AFL-CIO official. "They think mailing out 2 million preprinted postcards is a grass-roots campaign. The only thing that happens with postcards is that they get weighed."

Last year's anti-NAFTA effort was a case in point. Kirkland had planned to attack NAFTA through quiet lobbying, but he was pressured by local presidents and angry shop stewards to join the public campaign against it. Still, labor's real defeat came well before the vote in Congress, when the colorless Kirkland and the federation's secretary-treasurer, Thomas Donahue, lost the leadership of the anti-NAFTA battle to Ross Perot. "The problem with the NAFTA debate was that all of a sudden they had this visibility, but they didn't know what to do with it," says labor historian Michael Kazin.

Under Kirkland the AFL-CIO also has kept its distance from new experiments in labor relations and collective bargaining. "I describe the platform of the AFL-CIO in high performance workplace issues as having its head stuck in the sand and its hand over its crotch hoping for the best," says a union official who pushed for such cooperation.

Some union leaders argue that what the federation does is far less important than what the individual unions do—that it's not the federation's job to push organizing. That's partly true. Yet Kirkland's approach has filtered down through the movement itself. Many unions and their locals still put far more emphasis on conventional political lobbying and campaigning than on organizing new members. One labor organizer tells of speaking at a recent meeting of 150 local union leaders in Chicago. When he asked how many of them had worked on a Democratic party campaign, almost every hand went up. When he asked how many of them had participated in an organizing drive, not one hand went up.

What would be the consequences of labor's revival? I would suggest that many of the social and economic ills Americans now blame on technology, television and drug trafficking—from the decline in living standards to the loss of community—are traceable to labor's decline and could be partly remedied by its rejuvenation.

Beginning in the mid-1930s unions raised workers' wages well above what they otherwise would have been; the result has been a fairer distribution of the nation's wealth and greater purchasing power for the country's goods. Nonunionized workers also benefited, as employers raised their wages and gave them benefits to discourage them from joining unions. Conversely, when unions declined in the 1970s, so did the real wages of union and nonunion workers alike.

At the same time, in many towns and cities, thriving union halls replaced churches and pubs as the center of social and political life, holding together neighborhoods that would have been divided bitterly along racial and ethnic lines. The labor movement had an especially profound effect on black Americans, contributing a generation of black leaders—including A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, Coleman Young and Charles Hayes—who pursued the ideal of racial integration rather than separation. As the labor movement has receded, this broader sense of community has disappeared in favor of polarizing visions based on racial or ethnic animosity. The left itself has become an apostle of division and divisiveness.

The success of unions also forged some balance between business and labor in the market and in politics. The postwar American pluralism celebrated by political scientists David Truman, Robert Dahl and V. O. Key had its defects, but it was far more representative than the system that preceded and succeeded it. When labor faltered, a disproportionate amount of power was placed in the hands not only of business but of special interest groups—from NARAL to the NRA. The shift in power didn't enhance direct democracy; it led to greater manipulation by unaccountable elites.

Of course, there is another side to this story. Freeman and other labor economists acknowledge that the high wages and elaborate work rules won by labor unions contributed to the failure of American firms to keep pace with their competitors in the '70s. Labor's revival could similarly cripple American firms and leave workers worse off in the long run. And while the leadership of the United Auto Workers, the Communications Workers of America and other major unions have learned over the last two decades that it is not in their interest to reach agreements that will make it harder for companies to compete, other unions still adhere to a 1930s, us-vs.-them model of industrial unionism. The intransigence of these unions is reinforced by the hostility that many employers display toward any union, whatever its objectives.

The question for the '90s will be whether labor and business can meet each other halfway—exchanging, in effect, union recognition of business's need to compete with business's recognition of unions' right to represent workers. If labor and business do come together, we'll all benefit, whether we belong to a union or not. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

What's Ahead?

People have been pestering Spike Lee with questions ever since he became prominent. If he had the range that a filmmaker ought to have, why didn't he make films chiefly about characters other than blacks? And if there were to be only black films from him, why didn't he show range in *them*—and deal with something other than anger? Rightly he has ignored the first question, but, although the second question overlooked much in his work, he has now tried to answer it squarely. With dim results.

The first flaw of **Crooklyn** (Universal) is its title. For decades we've all had reason (Lepke, Murder, Inc.) to associate Brooklyn with crime. Lee's title seems to trade on that linkage; but his picture has nothing whatever to do with crime. Written with two of his sisters, *Crooklyn* is a simple comedy-drama about a black middle-class family in Brooklyn some twenty years ago.

What's wrong with it is not (or not only) that it lacks the Lee sizzle but that, like most such white comedy-dramas, it's inbred. It's less about exploring middle-class life than about perpetuating film and T.V. clichés about middle-class life. The Carmichael family—schoolteacher mother, unemployed musician father, four young sons and a daughter—step right out of the T.V. to which the youngsters are addicted. The screenplay undoubtedly has details of black speech and custom that will be picked up by black audiences, but it's hard to see how any of us can find here a glint of real insight or of unvarnished truth. This sanitized film is Lee without the Spike.

Dad, solidly played by Delroy Lindo, is a dreamer who loves his wife and children but can't focus on their financial problems. Mom, done by the versatile Alfre Woodard, is really the center of the family and is trying to hold things together. (Is this beginning to sound faintly familiar?) The children, with their childish emotional squalls, keep the household simmering. All this, despite the bickerings, is so basically blissful that we know a major heart-wrench must be coming. It arrives. The survivors bite their lips and carry on.

The only surprising element in Lee's script is its banality. But in the directing itself, his talent still shines. The very first shot is of a boy on a fire escape on a summer day, acting as starter of a race. When he gives the word, the camera pans down to some kids scuttling along the sidewalk. This opening sweep is like the opening glissando of an overture, and for a few minutes thereafter—with a rapid collage of children's games and adult chat on the summer street—we're tempted to think that Lee is going to dare to make a film about dailyness. It's something like the opening of *Do the Right Thing*. That film then boiled into a storm; this one slurps into syrup.

At one point Lee gets desperate to liven things up cinematically. The little girl goes to visit relatives in Maryland, and Lee shoots those scenes with an anamorphic lens that makes the screen look squeezed. The preview audience was puzzled. I went back to the projection booth and complained that another lens was needed for this sequence. The projectionist explained that the squeeze was deliberate. Unconvinced, I went back to my seat and soon saw, with the intercutting of some normal "flat" sequences back in Brooklyn, that the projectionist was right. Lee was trying to show how the little girl felt in the relatives' home. But it's a strain.

So far, Lee's strength has been in disorder, realized or incipient. Who knows what lies ahead of such a young and gifted man? But in his first venture into (relative) social order, he has settled for well-worn surfaces.

Lee's success opened doors for even younger black filmmakers, some of whom are now facing crises of their own. John Singleton made a striking debut in 1991, when he was 23, with *Boyz N the Hood*, a film seemingly ripped out of urban agony. His next picture, *Poetic Justice* (1993), was a silly concoction. Matty Rich, even younger, made his debut in the same year with *Straight Out of Brooklyn*, which did indeed seem straight out of Brooklyn housing projects, with troubles both family and communal. A somewhat rough but really extraordinary first film. Now Rich presents **The Inkwell** (Touchstone), which is an even more saccharine confectionery than *Crooklyn*. Middle-class blacks again—again twenty years ago. Parents having trouble with their adolescent son. Dad and Mom and Son go to visit relatives on Martha's Vineyard, where there is a black summer

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Four Weddings and a Funeral. *Hugh Grant buzzes brightly as the hero of this British comedy-romance, and Andie MacDowell almost takes off, too. Many delights. (Reviewed 4/4/94)* **Sunday's Children.** *Ingmar Bergman's autobiographical screenplay directed by his son, Daniel. The 8-year-old Ingmar and the 50-year-old Ingmar juxtaposed with his father. The exquisite lyrical quality is insidiously deceptive. (5/16/94)* **A Tale of Winter.** *Another of Eric Rohmer's burnished studies of love and sex, small-scale but with resonances. A young Parisian woman loses her lover, then finds him again after much experience. (5/9/94)* **Thirty-Two Short Films about Glenn Gould.** *Unique, intelligent, witty, poignant. Re-created episodes and latter-day remembrances, delicately maneuvered by the writer-director François Girard. (4/25/94)* **—SK**

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colony and a black beach called The Inkwell. The characters' color is all that distinguishes this infusion from the other *Summer of 19–* pictures that keep dripping into the world's film veins.

Both Singleton and Rich showed impressive strength in their debuts. Then, for both, came two problems: the Second Film, a scare that confronts every director who has made a strong start; and another more specialized problem, because they were young and black and made the film industry drool. Commercial pressure. The silk-suited hawks swept down.

This happened to Lee, too, presumably, after his first picture, but Lee is more prickly and thorny and he already had plans. Singleton and Rich, with apparently fewer internal resources, seem to have been more easily exploited. Singleton's second film was at least black in temper and interest. Rich's is a black reproduction of a white film—a very weary white film, too.

I don't argue that all black films must be on the barricades. *Straight Out of Brooklyn* wasn't. Neither was Joseph P. Vasquez's unappreciated *Hangin' with the Homeboys*, also 1991. The question is whether these debutants can resist the easy access to film production suddenly put at their disposal—a tidal temptation after the struggle to begin—until they have something to do that is as authentic as their first films; and whether there is more than one authentic film in them. So far, an open question.

Apology. Last week, listing Ingmar Bergman's recent publications, I egregiously omitted the two novels from which he adapted his two screenplays, *The Best Intentions* and *Sunday's Children.* (Both novels are published here by Arcade.) It's not a new process for an author to write a novel from which he means to adapt a screenplay: Graham Greene did it with *The Third Man*; Peter Handke did it with *The Left-Handed Woman.* I ought to have noted that Bergman did it, too. Twice. •

The Lost Lesbian

By Bernard Knox

Sappho: A Garland
The Poems and Fragments of Sappho
translated by Jim Powell

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 65 pp., $15)

The Laughter of Aphrodite:
A Novel about Sappho of Lesbos
by Peter Green

(University of California Press, 274 pp., $22)

The "garland" of Jim Powell's felicitous translation of Sappho is a tattered remnant. It might well have been subtitled *The Poem and Fragments of Sappho,* for there is only one poem in the book that we can be reasonably sure is complete, the playful summons to Aphrodite that stands at its head. There is one other poem—the famous description of the physical symptoms of Sappho's desire and jealousy as she watches a young woman charm a man with the sweetness of her voice and laughter ("... a subtle fire races inside *my skin, my / eyes can't see a* thing...")—that we would have thought complete if our source, the treatise *On the Sublime,* had not gone on to quote the beginning of another stanza. Most of our texts, like these two, are quotations that appear in the work of men writing many centuries after Sappho's time, but unlike these two, they are for the most part distressingly short—phrases with little or no context, a few lines offered to illustrate a discussion of meter, dialect, style or grammar, single words cited by lexicographers.

Since the final decades of the nineteenth century, our knowledge of Sappho's poetry has been significantly enriched by fragments that come directly from ancient editions of her work. They are not written on the parchment used by medieval scribes, but on

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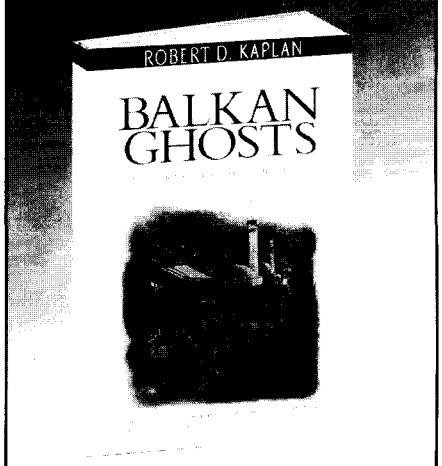

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what were once papyrus scrolls and are now holed and ragged scraps found in archaeological digs in Egypt, most of them in the rubbish heaps of a provincial city called Oxyrhynchus.

These new texts have brought us great riches, but also problems and frustrations. Even the longest consecutive manuscripts have gaps. Some of these gaps occur in the middle of a poem, as in the famous poem about the host of cavalry, infantry and ships—or fade off inconclusively and tantalizingly at the end, like the poem of yearning and regret that begins: "Honest, I wish I were dead." Many have only the ends or the beginnings of lines, like the one that Ezra Pound printed under the title "Papyrus" in his *Lustra* (though it is actually, for once, a parchment, not a papyrus fragment):

Spring ...
Too long...
Gongula...

Sometimes, however, the new fragments add to passages preserved in the medieval manuscript tradition. For example, fifteen lines written on a potsherd of the third century B.C. transform two separate quotations from writers of the second century A.D.—Athenaeus of Alexandria and Hermogenes of Tarsus—into a solid remnant of a hymn to Aphrodite, summoning her to Lesbos from Crete. And one small scrap, published in 1965, completed the final line of Sappho's description of her jealous frenzy as she watched a man and a young woman intent on each other. The text in *On the Sublime*—"I seem to be little short of dying"—has two syllables, or perhaps three syllables, missing after the word *phainomai*, "I seem." Scholars tried to fill the gap by various expedients. The papyrus, a torn scrap from a commentary on Sappho, quotes the passage as *phainom' emautai*—"I seem to myself..."—a solution that now seems obvious, but occurred to no one.

Even with the papyrus finds, the total number of intelligible verses that we have is small. Powell's *Garland*, a translation of "all the surviving poems and fragments ... that make consecutive sense, however brief, torn or abruptly interrupted," offers us no more than some 500 lines. The loss has been enormous. We know that the library in Alexandria, in the third century B.C., possessed a complete text of Sappho in nine papyrus rolls; the first and largest of them contained a total of 1,320 lines, arranged in the four-line stanza that still bears her name.

Papyrus book-rolls, especially if shielded from the effects of damp, and if not read too often (constant unrolling weakens the fibers), can last a long time; we have accounts of readers consulting papyrus books that were 300 years old. But such occasions must have been rare, otherwise we would not have accounts of them. Texts not transferred to hardier but more expensive parchment, which became the standard medium for book production in the fourth century A.D., were hardly likely to survive the millennium that elapsed before the first printing of ancient Greek texts in Venice during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. And even those so transferred might be erased to make the expensive parchment available for material considered more desirable.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Like most of the lyric poets of archaic Greece, Sappho was passed over as the canon of ancient writers who were judged essential for educational purposes came into being. In addition to the classic authors, however, the scribes of Byzantium copied and preserved for us such second- if not third-rate poets as Oppian, whose verse treatise on hunting was so admired by the Roman emperor Caracalla that he rewarded the poet with a gold piece for every one of its 2,100 lines. Meanwhile the last remaining texts of Sappho crumbled on disintegrating papyrus or were scrubbed off parchment to make room for what the Byzantine authorities considered higher things.

John Tzetzes, an erratic but voluminously productive Byzantine scholar of the twelfth century, describes "Sappho, her lyre and her songs" with a phrase that means something like "accidental victims of the passage of time." A scholarly churchman known as Michael of Italy, writing in the first half of the twelfth century, refers to Sappho's wedding songs in terms that suggest an acquaintance with a text. But if there was a text still available, it must have perished, together with so much else, in 1204, when the Christian city of Byzantium surrendered to a besieging army of Venetians, Franks and Flemings, in a piratical expedition known as the Fourth Crusade. The victorious commanders gave their troops carte blanche to rob, rape, burn and kill for three days; and in the massacres and destruction that followed, churches were desecrated and libraries were burned.

It is not hard to understand the Byzantine lack of interest in Sappho's poetry. She wrote, like her contemporary, Alcaeus, in the Aeolic dialect of her native island, and this was no recommendation in a culture that was trying desperately, as the spoken language changed with the passing of the centuries, to maintain, at least in written documents, the purity of the Attic prose of Plato and Demosthenes. Worse still, her principal theme, one might almost

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say her obsessive theme, was passionate love—"Eros the Limb-loosener ... sweet, bitter, impossible creature"—and this was anathema to a culture dominated by monastic ideals, especially since the love of which Sappho sings so graphically and so forcefully is not the love of women for men, but the love of women for women.

Sappho's songs are full of women's names: Gongyla, Anaktoria, Athis, Abanthis, Dika, Irana, Gorgo, Andromeda, Mnasidika, Gyrinno, Mika, Megara, Doricha, Archeanassa. This creates an atmosphere worlds apart from that of classical fifth-century Athens, where even in lawsuits, in which their property might be the issue, women's names were never mentioned. In democratic Athens the tone was set by Pericles' advice to the widows and the mothers of the men whose glorious death in battle he was celebrating: that they should be "least the subject of report among men, for good or evil." The less said about them, in other words, the better.

Still, women on Lesbos in the sixth century, at least the women of the aristocratic families that governed the island, seem to have made their voices clearly heard and their persons visible. Alcaeus, in exile from the capital city of Mitylene during one of the political upheavals of the time, bewails his isolation in the country and misses the sight of "the women of Lesbos going to and fro in their trailing robes in a contest of beauty" in the precinct of the goddess Hera. And Sappho's conception of women's place in society is the exact opposite of the Periclean ideal of silence and anonymity. She threatens a rich, uncultured woman with precisely the limbo Athenian women were consigned to—"When you lie dead there will be no memory of you..."—and expects her poetic celebration of her loves to keep her name alive for future generations: "I think that someone will remember us in another time."

Except for the epithalamia, which were songs written for the celebration of a marriage, the fragments locate us in a strictly female world, a world in which Sappho sings "to delight my women friends," in which female alliances form and dissolve—"But Attis, to you the thought of me grows / hateful, and you fly off to Andromeda"—and in which, time and again, Sappho longingly remembers an absent love—"Always her thoughts turn, longing to come where we / also think of her...." The women addressed, praised or longed for in these fragments seem to belong to some kind of association; and the implied

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context often suggests some form of communal living:

> Please, Abanthis, your Sappho calls you: won't you take this Lydian lyre and play another song to Gongyla while desire still flutters your heart-strings
>
> for that girl, that beautiful girl, her dress's clinging makes you shake when you see it ....

The nature of this community has been the subject of much speculation. Some have imagined it as a religious cult devoted to the worship of Aphrodite, who is summoned, in one of the fragments, to leave Crete and join in "the gladness of our festivities." Others, particularly German scholars who took their cue from the passionate defense of Sappho as a virtuous wife and mother developed by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf in his denunciation of Pierre Louys's sapphic fiction *Les Chansons de Bilitis*, saw it as a sort of school for young ladies: Sappho as the teacher of young girls, training them in music and poetry and the graces that would make them desirable brides.

For this prim scenario Denys Page, the Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge and an acidulous critic, had nothing but contempt. Sappho's feeling for her younger companions, he insisted in 1955, was "a lover's passion, not sisterly affection or maternal benevolence" and the "union of cult-association and girls' academy under the presidency of Sappho" was a fiction that found no support either in the fragments or in the external sources. The first of these two statements—"a lover's passion"—is now generally accepted, but the second—"no support ... in the external evidence"—has been undermined by the appearance of a papyrus dated to the middle years of the second century A.D. It is a fragment of a commentary on Sappho. "...But she," it says, "educating in peace and quiet the noblest girls not only from the local families but also from families in Ionia. And [she was] so highly regarded among her fellow citizens that Callias of Mitylene said in..." This Callias, as we know from other sources, wrote a commentary on Sappho in the second century B.C., and the appearance of his name in this context lends a certain respectability to the statement about Sappho's activity as a teacher.

Whatever the social context may have been, it fostered a passionate intensity in Sappho's relations with her female companions. And she gave voice to this passion in a language that has no parallel in Greek literature in its frankness, its declarative simplicity and its melody and subtle rhythmic effects. "The euphony and charm of this passage," says Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a literary critic of the first century B.C., citing the hymn to Aphrodite, "lies in the cohesion and smoothness of the joinery. Words are juxtaposed and interwoven according to certain natural affinities and groupings of the letters...." The Sapphic impression of emotion poured out in unpremeditated speech is the product of sophisticated art.

Such poetry confronts the translator with a formidable challenge. The charm of the Aeolic dialect, of course, has to be written off as a loss at once; we are fortunate that no one has tried to give us a Sappho singing in the Lowland Scots of Robert Burns or the rustic Dorset sometimes indulged by Thomas Hardy. Sappho's lyric meters, however, are another matter. The stunning impact of her poetic statement depends in large part on her manipulation of the constraints imposed by strict metrical patterns. The most famous of these patterns is the one named after her: the Sapphic stanza. It is a sequence of three eleven-syllable lines. Each line is built around a choriamb, a foot consisting of two long syllables enclosing two short ones (the English schoolboy's mnemonic is "mother-in-law"), followed by a dactylic-spondaic close ("shave and a haircut"). In ancient Greek the patterns are based on the time it takes to pronounce each syllable; the schoolboy mnemonics, as is the way of English verse, depend on stress, which played no role in ancient Greek speech. A Sapphic stanza based on stress has often been tried by poets writing in English. Swinburne came close to reproducing the effect but, as so often, the content of his lines was insubstantial and sometimes close to nonsense.

In any case, a complicated and tightly organized stress pattern repeated in a sequence is a form alien to English verse. English Sapphics tend to sound monotonous, even slightly comic. One of the most successful sets of English Sapphics, in fact, is the satiric dialogue entitled *The Needy Knife-Grinder*, which George Canning published in *The Anti-Jacobin* in 1797. (It was a parody of a sentimental poem in the same meter, *The Widow*, by Robert Southey.) In Canning's dialogue, The Friend of Humanity addresses the needy knife-grinder:

> Needy Knife-grinder! whither are you going?
> Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order—
> Bleak blows the blast; your hat has got a hole in't,
> So have your breeches.

The Friend of Humanity asks the knife-grinder how he came to such poverty. Was he a victim of oppression, by a rich man, the squire, the parson or an attorney? Has he not "read *The Rights of Man* by Tom Paine?" He prepares to shed floods of tears as he listens to the knife-grinder's "pitiful story." But the knife-grinder disappoints him. "Story? God bless you! I have none to tell, sir...." He got into an argument and a fight at the local pub, was arrested and put in the stocks. He will be glad to drink to the Philanthropist's health if given sixpence, "But for my part, I never love to meddle / with politics, sir." The Friend of Humanity is outraged.

> *I* give thee sixpence! I will see thee damn'd first—
> Wretch! whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to vengeance;
> Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,
> Spiritless outcast!
> (Kicks the knife-grinder, overturns his wheel and exits in a transport of Republican enthusiasm and universal philanthropy.)

This comic example of Sappho's metric adapted for the English ear highlights the problem facing the translator who uses the verse form and hopes to preserve the lyric tone of the original: the strict pattern is so different from the norms of English versification that he has to steer a difficult course between overemphasis, with a resultant jigging and potentially comic effect, and oversubtlety, which may produce lines where the pattern is hardly perceptible, even for those familiar with it in Greek. Jim Powell is fully aware of the dangers, and in an afterword he speaks of the "fluidity, ease, grace and melodic variety" of Sappho's measures and identifies her "secret" as "keeping her caesura moving"; in her lines the caesura, a pause in midverse, "seldom falls in the same place in two consecutive lines."

Powell has tried to reproduce the effect in such stanzas as:

> She's not here, and I'd rather see her lovely
> step, her sparkling glance and her face than gaze on
> all the troops in Lydia in their chariots and glittering armor.

Here he also follows Sappho's practice of frequent enjambment that converts the separate line units into an unbroken flow of discourse. This is a feature of her style that was praised, as Powell points out, by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his discussion of the "polished style," in which "the words ... keep on the move, swept forward ... like the current of a stream that never rests," a style that "sets out to ... interweave its component parts and to make them convey, as far as

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possible, the effect of a single utterance."

Dionysius also speaks of the euphony of the verses he quotes—the juxtaposition and interweaving of words "according to certain natural affinities and groupings of the letters." The translator must contrive to create the euphony using the resources of his or her own language, but Powell occasionally gives us an approximation to Sappho's own sound, as in the first line of the hymn:

> Artfully adorned Aphrodite, deathless child of Zeus and weaver of wiles I beg you...

The repeated *a* sounds of *athanat' Aphrodita* in the first line are reproduced and the alliteration in the second line gives us a faint echo of the patterns of *p*, *d* and *l* in Sappho's *pai Dios doloploke lissomai se.*

Scholarly editions of Sappho's poems usually arrange them in the books to which they were assigned in the Alexandrian library, but how Sappho may have arranged them we cannot guess. Like many translators before him, Powell has devised his own pattern:

> an integrated collage or mosaic, playing off modernist techniques of poetic sequence, fragmentary montage and stream of consciousness to create a cumulative movement that points to the integrity of her work as the surviving fragments disclose it. By allowing the briefer fragments to create contexts for one another, this permits them to convey more poetic sense than they can in isolation or at random....

The resulting book is a brilliant success. Powell has shored her fragments against her ruins to give us a garland in which the flowers, though tattered, have not faded.

One of Powell's afterwords is a short account of what we know about Sappho's life. The ancient sources provide little information. Of that little information, some is suspect, some is contradictory, some of it is fiction and some is the product of desperate confusion, like the eight different names suggested for her father in the late Byzantine encyclopedia, the *Suda*. In the fragments of her poems she mentions two brothers, Charaxus and Larichus, as well as her daughter, Kleis, named after Sappho's mother. For the name of her husband we have to fall back on the *Suda*, which supplies us with the name Kerkylos and identifies him as a merchant from the island of Andros. The name occurs nowhere else, and *kerkos* is a coarse Greek term, (one of many) for the male member; since Andros, besides being the name of an island is also the genitive case of the Greek word for "man," the combination sounds like an off-color joke—"Mr. Prick from the Isle of Man," as D. A. Campbell deftly translates it in the new Loeb Library edition of Sappho and Alcaeus. Since we know of six Athenian comedies titled *Sappho*, in one of which the poets Archilochus of Paros and Hipponax of Ephesus, in defiance of topography, chronology and sexual preference, were presented as lovers of Sappho, it seems more than possible that the name Kerkylos may be the invention of an Athenian comic poet of the fourth century B.C. From a much more reliable source, an inscription from the island of Paros dated to 263 B.C., we learn that at some point in her life (the date is missing on the stone) Sappho took ship and went into exile at Syracuse in Sicily.

Out of this potpourri of gossip and truth, of ignorant guesswork and satirical invention, Peter Green has fashioned a novel, *The Laughter of Aphrodite*, that takes the form of an autobiographical memoir written by Sappho in the last months of her life. He is not the first writer to have used Sappho's life as material for fiction. Jean Dejean's *Fictions of Sappho, 1548-1937* is an absorbing exploration of the fantastic visions, ranging from the hilarious to the appalling, that the subject has generated in the minds of dramatists, poets, novelists and scholars over the years. What is perhaps Dejean's prize exhibit, *La Dernière Journée de Sappho*, a novel by Gabriel Faure (not the composer) published in 1901, has the heroine in a bed with posts that are "sculptures of oversized male organs," dressed in a tunic with "three openings" that "leave naked points where Sappho desires lips to linger...." She is dressing for a festival of Aphrodite where she will recite an ode to the goddess "as a prelude to the festival's opening ritual, the deflowering of six Lesbian virgins."

But Green is a noted historian. He is the author of a biography of Alexander that has the pace and the excitement of a novel but draws on great learning and acute source criticism to present a much darker picture of the great Macedonian conqueror than the mildly critical panegyrics to which we have become accustomed. He has also written *Alexander to Actium*, a brilliant re-creation of the whole range of Hellenistic civilization, the 300 years in which the Greeks ruled the Near East until Cleopatra's Egypt, the last holdout, fell to the Romans. Green is also a brilliant translator of Greek and Latin poetry—Ovid, Juvenal, Apollonius Rhodius—and a provocative and witty essayist on classical themes; readers in search of lively reassessments of ancient authors and their modern interpreters should try his *Essays in Antiquity* (1960), *The Shadow of the Parthenon* (1972) and *Classical Bearings* (1989). And he has had the good fortune (or the good judgment) to have lived for several years on Lesbos in the days before the arrival of the fleets of jumbo jets that now, all summer long, fill the hotels and the beaches with northern tourists in search of a sunburn.

Green's novel about Sappho, first published in England in 1965 and now reissued by the University of California Press, is a splendidly imagined re-creation of the historical context of Sappho's life on Lesbos around the turn of the sixth century B.C. He compares his task to that of "an archaeologist reassembling some amphora from hundreds of shards—of which more than half are missing." Perhaps a better comparison would be to a person trying to reconstitute a jigsaw puzzle out of a pile of pieces containing only a quarter of the right ones and more than a few that may belong to a different puzzle. We have ancient notices, for example, of "another Sappho" on Lesbos, who was not a poet but a courtesan.

Sappho's fragments give no hint of the fact, but she lived in an age of social and political turmoil. The poems of her fellow citizen, Alcaeus, resound with the clash of arms raised in civil war, and with the strident hatreds of factional strife. The issues and even the line-up of the contestants are far from clear in our meager sources: fragments of Alcaeus's partisan lyrics (*stasiotica*); historical details, often without context, cited in Aristotle's *Politics*; and papyrus fragments of commentaries on Alcaeus's poems. Popular agitation against the oppressive rule of aristocratic clans, probably backed by an increasingly wealthy merchant class excluded from power, seems to have resulted in civil war. This war ended only after the citizens of Mitylene, weary of the incessant turmoil, elected a man named Pittacus to an office Aristotle calls a "dictatorship over willing people." Pittacus sent Alcaeus and his associates into exile.

It may have been at this time that Sappho set sail for Syracuse. There is no hint in her fragments of any political activity, or of any interest in politics. It was probably through the involvement of members of her family that she was "caught," in Louis MacNeice's phrase, "in the eternal factions and reactions / of the city-state." Pittacus turned

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out to be a benevolent despot. Despite the personal insults Alcaeus hurled at him in song—"pot-belly, low-born"—he spared the poet's life when he was captured in a fruitless attempt to overthrow the regime. Pittacus resigned his office at the end of his appointed term and was later numbered among the Seven Wise Men of Greece.

Out of this unpromising material Green has constructed a convincing and fascinating tale of intrigue, conspiracy and war. As a historian he bases his narrative on what facts are certain or probable, but as a novelist he makes connections and invents characters that have no authority except his own imagination. Where Clio leaves him in the lurch, he has recourse to Calliope, the epic muse. The result is irresistible. The figures that emerge dimly from the papyrus scraps come vibrantly to life: a cynical, knowing Alcaeus; his tough brother Antimenidas; a Pittacus whose outward bluff honesty masks a subtle, if well-intentioned, conspirator. Kerkylos, of whom we know nothing except his suspicious name, is introduced late in the story and soon polished off, killed in an ambush. There are also some invented characters who are as large as life. One of them, Sappho's aunt Helen, is billed as a "historical character with fictitious name (real name unknown)" and provided with a "fictitious relationship," namely a marriage to Pittacus, who is even larger, a brilliant creation and a dominating figure in the tangled skein of Sappho's destiny.

All these figures are seen through Sappho's eyes, as, facing her end, she tries to make sense of her life. Like many successful historical novelists of recent years, Green assumes the persona of his protagonist: Wilder as Julius Caesar, Graves as Claudius, Yourcenar as Hadrian, Vidal as Julian the Apostate. Like Yourcenar, Green assumes the mask of the opposite sex, but Green has taken much greater risks. Yourcenar's Hadrian relives in his memoirs a life of imperial power, and sometimes the record of administrative problems and architectural projects is heavy going for the reader. The one real passion of his life, his love for the young Bithynian Antinous, whose death in the Nile he commemorated by establishing Antinous's worship as a god, is disposed of in a few short chapters that give barely a hint that the relationship was physical as well as emotional. But Green has a much more difficult role to play: Byron's "burning Sappho" ("my heart is burning with desire" she wrote, and "a subtle fire races inside my skin") is especially complicated since the fire that races under the skin of this wife and mother is passion for younger women.

With all the deference proper for a mere male assessing the success of such an endeavor in this era of gender sensitivity, it seems to me that Green has given us moving and convincing images of Sappho's loves and hates, her victories and defeats in the service of Aphrodite, the goddess whom she summons to her aid as an ally in what we know was the first poem in the Alexandrian edition. The physical aspect of these love affairs is not avoided, but it is handled with a grace and a discretion that give it a kind of purity. For the emotions, Green has Sappho herself to draw on; he weaves phrases from the fragments into Sappho's prose account of her life. He brilliantly evokes a phase of Greek civilization that was unique in the freedom of action and expression that it allowed to women, and he nostalgically re-creates the sights, scents and sounds of Lesbos, a place that was still, when he lived there, "of all the Aegean islands" the one that "has perhaps changed least since ancient times."

The most controversial item in the novel is the manner of Sappho's death. It is based on the only ancient account that we have, which tells us that Sappho killed herself in spectacular fashion for the love of a young man called Phaon. This story has been almost unanimously rejected by the scholarly world. (It can be traced back as far as the Athenian comic dramatist Menander of the fourth century B.C., and it is discussed by Strabo, the geographer of the Roman Empire, who quotes the Menander passage in his description of the white cliff at Leucas, on the west coast of Greece.) A leap into the sea from this cliff was supposed to "put an end to love," and Sappho was, according to Menander, the first to take it: "in her pursuit of haughty Phaon she threw herself, tormented by desire, from the cliff."

Strabo goes on to describe what he calls an "ancestral custom among the Leucadians": at an annual celebration in the temple of Apollo on the cliff top, a criminal was thrown down from the lookout point "in order to turn away evil." All kinds of wings and birds were tied to him to help break his fall by their fluttering action, and men in small boats waited below to try to rescue him and take him safely to foreign soil. Such a scapegoat rite has many parallels in ancient accounts of still earlier times, but it raises doubts about the truth of the Sappho story. As for Phaon, the young sailor with whom Sappho is supposed to have fallen in love late in her life, our few ancient references to him portray a mythological figure rather than a real one: a boatman who in his old age gave Aphrodite, disguised as an old woman, free passage and received in return the gift of renewed youth, or a young man with whom Aphrodite fell in love and, for reasons not explained, hid in a bed of lettuce.

Green accepts the story of Phaon and the fatal leap. Sappho writes the final pages of her memoir at Leucas, where her ship has made a stop on its way to Sicily, where she hopes to see Phaon and to regain his love. But she overhears seamen talking at dockside and learns that Phaon has been killed by the husband of one of the many women he has seduced. She makes her preparations to climb, the next day, to the temple of Apollo on the cliff top. "I have been wary of modern myths," Green writes in an afterword to his novel,

> though I hope I have treated ancient ones with respect. For centuries it has been a favorite pastime among scholars and others to prove (to their own if no one else's satisfaction) that Sappho could not have been a lesbian, in the modern sense of the word; could not have committed suicide; and could not, for good measure, have had an affair in late middle-age with a boatman.

Green's most detailed source is the skillful version of the story found in Sappho's letter to Phaon in Ovid's *Heroides*. It is one of a series of fictional letters written by women (all the others are mythological) to lovers who have abandoned them. What sources Ovid was using we do not know; he may have had evidence, now lost, that went farther back than Menander. (The letter gives one new piece of information, that may be reliable, to the effect that Sappho's father died when she was 6 years old.) It is written with Ovid's usual rhetorical skill and emotional flair, and it creates a convincing psychological portrait of a woman who late in her life has lost her heart to a younger man and has been callously abandoned.

There is no other account of Sappho's death. The historian may prefer silence, but the novelist must invent a fresh one or use what is at hand. We have little of Sappho's poetry, and we know even less about her life, but in the light of what little we do know, the passionate attachment to a younger man and the leap from the cliff seem improbable. Still, Green has made them part of the pattern of Sappho's life, which he sees as one devoted to the goddess Aphrodite. Early in that life Sappho's aunt Helen takes her to a ceremony in

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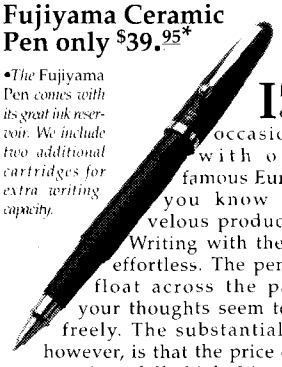

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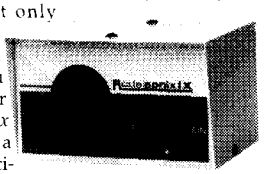

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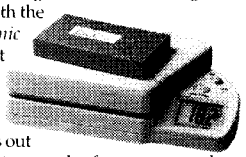

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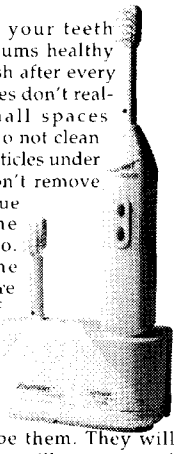

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the temple of Aphrodite, where she sees for the first time the image of the goddess. In a vision the face smiles at her—"a soft, amused, enigmatic smile"—and calls her by her name. Sappho feels that she has been chosen to serve the goddess, that her acceptance of Aphrodite's service has released in her a gift, "the sacrament of song, the sweet agony of creation."

Her aunt warns her that the gifts of Aphrodite can be dangerous, a warning that Sappho only understands fully forty years later when, deserted by Phaon, she sees, in the little shrine of Aphrodite in her own house, "the smile on the goddess's face ... shadowed, foam-cold, with ... the cruelty of the sea in it...." Aphrodite has played "her last, most merciless trick" on Sappho, inspiring her middle-aged passion for Phaon and bringing about his departure and death. The smile of the goddess has become the "cold laughter of immortal, devious Aphrodite as she moves her pawn across the board." But the leap from the white cliff is part of Sappho's declaration of independence from the goddess she has served so long.

Green rounds off the document by printing, in the original Greek, the fragment that runs, in Powell's translation, "I think that someone will remember us in another time." Anyone who reads this informed and imaginative re-creation of Sappho and her world will find it hard to forget.

BERNARD KNOX is the author most recently of *Backing Into the Future: The Classical Tradition and Its Renewal* (W.W. Norton).

Law's Labors

BY KATHLEEN M. SULLIVAN

Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of *Roe* v. *Wade* by David J. Garrow

(Macmillan, 981 pp., $28)

Announcing his retirement recently, Justice Harry Blackmun insisted that *Roe* v. *Wade* was a necessary step, "a step that had to be taken as we go down the road toward the full emancipation of women." *Roe*, which Blackmun wrote in 1973, held that a constitutional right of privacy barred states from criminalizing abortion. That right of privacy had previously protected rights to marry, procreate and use birth control. *Roe* extended it to "a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy," a ruling the Court reaffirmed in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey* two summers ago.

Contrast Blackmun's view of the necessity of Roe's extension of the right of privacy with that of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. A women's rights litigator before she became a judge and plainly pro-choice herself, Ginsburg has written that *Roe* was not necessary for the liberalization of abortion law, nor was it focused enough on women's rights. In Ginsburg's view *Roe* short-circuited a rising pro-choice political movement that, left to its own devices, eventually would have repealed abortion laws in legislatures rather than in courts. If courts insist on deeming abortion a constitutional right, she argues further, they would do better to locate that right in equal protection for women rather than in the right of privacy relied upon in *Roe*. "Equal protection" is in the text of the Constitution. "Privacy" is not.

Historically, which view is more correct? This is an important question, since *Roe* has dominated constitutional controversy for more than twenty years. It led to pitched battles over Court appointments, as two Republican presidents waged war on the "judicial legislation" that was typified, they said, by *Roe*. And it failed to stop increasingly violent anti-abortion demonstrations in the streets. With a record like that, no wonder Ginsburg's revisionist view of *Roe* is shared by many people who are sympathetic to the right of choice (including the editors of this magazine). The conclusion that *Roe* and all its messy consequences were avoidable would have important implications for our understanding of constitutional law and strategy.

David Garrow's new book claims that history is on Blackmun's, not Ginsburg's, side of the debate. In Garrow's view *Roe* came down in the nick of time, and on the right grounds. His book tells in minute, sprawling detail the history of the litigation that established first the right to contraception and later the right to abortion. Garrow's evidence suggests that the political process did stubbornly block nationwide birth control and abortion reform, and would have continued to block these two rights had they not gained deliverance in federal court.

Garrow also suggests, against *Roe*'s critics, that privacy is an important constitutional right with a respectable pedigree. Using various justices' private notes and papers, as well as interviews with their former clerks, he reconstructs the Court's internal conferences, conversations and drafting process in an effort to demonstrate that the justices properly extracted the right of privacy from the Constitution, and did not make it up out of whole cloth.

Garrow devotes nearly half of his narrative to the contraception decisions. His tale begins with the early twentieth-century struggle of Connecticut birth-control advocates against a statute of 1879 that made it a crime to use or to prescribe contraceptives. The law was concocted by P. T. Barnum, state representative and temperance advocate as well as circus entrepreneur; the struggle was led by, among others, Katharine Hepburn's mother. While the Connecticut law was extreme, Garrow shows that other states, including Massachusetts and New York, also had anti-contraception statutes on their books until after the Supreme Court finally declared Connecticut's unconstitutional.

Garrow suggests that sectarian and class divisions kept Connecticut's legislative politics and law enforcement out of step with popular opinion, which increasingly favored legal access to birth control. Support for birth control clinics came from mostly Protestant, mostly upper-crust, mostly Republican ladies from Greenwich and other gentried enclaves. The opposition was led by the organized Catholic Church, even as a majority of Catholics polled privately began to support access to birth control methods other than Vatican roulette.

When the priests and bishops thundered from the pulpits of Hartford and New Haven against contraceptive law reform, Democratic lawmakers who depended on Catholic votes were cowed. Thus family planning clinics for poor women were shut down by prosecution or the threat of prosecution. The state legislature repeatedly refused to rescind the law. And the state courts declined to lift the ban, dismissing arguments that contraception is an inalienable right. No

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referendum was ever held for fear of unleashing religious strife.

Hence the lawsuit that eventually arrived at the Supreme Court in 1965 as *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*. The case arose from the prosecution of Connecticut Planned Parenthood Director Estelle Griswold for distributing diaphragms, pills and contraceptive jelly at a New Haven clinic. She was "ecstatic" when the police officers arrived because she hoped that her organization could win in federal court what it could not win in the state courts or legislature. Her case ultimately prompted the Supreme Court to rule, 7-2, that the use of birth control by married people was protected by a constitutional right of privacy, and could not be regulated by the legislature on purely moral grounds. (Later the Court unceremoniously extended this right to single people.)

Justice William Douglas's opinion for the Court is often ridiculed for its location of the unenumerated right of privacy in the "penumbras" of the rights to freedom of speech, conscience and physical security from arbitrary search and seizure enumerated in the Bill of Rights. But Garrow shows that the decision rested also on an alternative theory that eventually came to predominate in privacy law, leaving penumbras in the dust. That alternative theory—the view that privacy is implicit in constitutionally protected "liberty"—is the one that Garrow says was "powerfully and persuasively" articulated by Justice John Marshall Harlan, and less famously by Justice Arthur Goldberg, in *Griswold* and a precursor case. In Harlan's words, constitutional liberty shields us from "all substantial arbitrary impositions and purposeless restraints," including, in his view, anti-contraception laws.

The textual sources of their argument were the Fourteenth Amendment, which bars deprivations of "liberty" by the state without due process of law, and the Ninth Amendment, which declares that the people retain some rights even if the Bill of Rights does not mention them. Both sources have difficulties: the due process clause is arguably a procedural restraint without substantive content, and it is not clear that access to contraception and abortion fit within any right extant in 1789. But the Harlan-Goldberg argument was finally more structural and historical than textual. In their view the Constitution sets up a system of limited government in which some matters are beyond the pale of proper public concern. Such private matters are to be decided not by legislative majorities, but by individuals, one by one. How do we know what those private matters are? We look to the "teachings of history," the "traditions of our people" and the "basic values that underlie our society." Those values tell us that birth control is not the business of the state.

When Garrow shifts to abortion laws, he tells again the same basic story: efforts to repeal the abortion laws were doomed in state politics, but rescued by constitutional litigation in federal courts. He admits that the movement for legislative abortion reform had some initial success. Starting in 1967, several states, including California, liberalized their abortion laws to permit "therapeutic" abortions to preserve the physical or mental health of the mother, or to permit abortions in cases of rape or incest. In 1970 New York became the first state to repeal criminal abortion laws outright.

But, as Garrow tells the story, these early successes might have been among the last. Contrary to the hypothesis of the *Roe* revisionists, the right-to-life movement gathered political steam before *Roe*, not after it. This is an important historical fact. By 1972, spearheaded by the Catholic leadership, "anti-abortion forces had repeal advocates badly outgunned despite the countervailing national public opinion poll numbers." A grassroots anti-abortion campaign in Michigan succeeded in stopping a referendum in 1972 seeking the repeal of abortion laws. Photos of aborted fetuses proved an effective tactic in the campaign. Soon after, Pennsylvania passed a law that would have barred any abortion except where three doctors deemed it necessary to save a woman's life; this law was stopped only by the governor's veto.

Garrow extrapolates that but for *Roe*, pro-lifers might have had an increasing number of political victories in other states as well. It follows, he suggests, that judicial intervention was necessary if abortion was to be made available to women nationwide. It is always difficult to prove a counterfactual, but Garrow makes a convincing case at least that leaving abortion to state politics would not have produced a uniform liberalization trend. It more likely would have produced an intractable patchwork of permissive and prohibition states. For women in some states, access to abortion would thus have depended on the resources they had for travel.

Enter *Roe* and its companion case, *Doe* v. *Bolton*. *Roe* challenged Texas's abortion law, which was among the most restrictive in the nation, allowing abortions only to save a pregnant woman's life. *Doe* challenged a liberalized "therapeutic" abortion law in Georgia. Both challenges rested on the theory that abortion was protected by the same right of privacy that had earlier been held to guarantee access to contraception.

In 1973 the Supreme Court, by a vote of 7-2, more or less agreed. *Roe* and *Doe* barred states from criminalizing abortion until the last three months of pregnancy, and held abortion regulable in the first six months only to preserve a pregnant woman's health. Ironically, Blackmun intended the opinion that became a symbol of judicial arrogance as a compromise. A woman's decision to end a pregnancy was private, but she was not "isolated in her privacy. She carries an embryo and, later, a fetus." Still, the Court could not decide when, exactly, life begins, a question that had stumped doctors, philosophers and theologians. Hence the compromise: until the point when a fetus was viable—that is, could live outside the womb—the states had to treat abortion as on a par with birth control. Afterward, however, they could treat it as murder.

Garrow's narrative of the *Roe* and *Doe* litigation describes a number of personal cat fights among the lawyers jockeying to control the cases, but few fundamental disagreements about the overall privacy strategy that they pursued. Likewise his account of the Court's deliberations reveals a striking degree of consensus among the justices, with only Justices Byron White and William Rehnquist in "tart" dissent. White wrote that the Court favored "the convenience, whim or caprice of the putative mother" over fetal life.

Garrow's final chapter offers a condensed account of post-*Roe* abortion decisions and the unsuccessful effort to extend the constitutional right of privacy from procreative decision-making to sex acts themselves—an effort that came to an end with the Supreme Court's decision, in 1986 in *Bowers* v. *Hardwick*, to uphold Georgia's sodomy law. The book ends ambivalently. On the one hand, Garrow praises the *Casey* decision in 1992 as showing "that the constitutional legacy of *Roe* v. *Wade* was not dead but instead was very much alive." On the other hand, he reports the fatal shooting of Dr. David Gunn by a member of Rescue America.

Did *Roe* liberate abortion rights from the scourge of politics or nip a promising legislative reform movement in the bud? Garrow's narrative lacks analytic structure, but an answer may be teased out of his welter of detail. Garrow's account supports the view that judicial intervention was necessary because the channels of political change were blocked. His facts supply an answer to a conundrum that *Roe* has long posed for process-perfectionists, that is, those who view judicial review as a kind of antitrust law for democracy. The conun-

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drum is this: it is easy to see why discrete and insular minorities might need the help of the courts to compete in the political arena, for they are outnumbered under majority rule. But why would married couples or other openly heterosexual persons—surely a powerful political majority—need to resort to the courts?

The reason is that, as public choice theorists have long argued, imperfections in the political market may thwart the vindication of even majority preferences. A small but intense minority can exercise political influence disproportionate to its numbers when a diffuse and silent majority does not organize to fight back. (This is a lesson that industry lobbies realize at consumers' expense virtually every day.) Garrow convincingly depicts the legislative success of the Catholic Church leadership and its disciplined parishioners as a textbook case of this phenomenon.

Of course, not every imperfection of the political process warrants judicial correction. Since the New Deal, for example, the Court has not held that economic rights trump legislative outcomes, however skewed. Thus it is crucial to Garrow's argument that he say why access to contraception and abortion should be given more constitutional protection than, say, liberty of contract. In part Garrow answers this question with appeals to sentimentality. Here his book is on its weakest ground. He suggests that Robert Bork might not have been so harsh in his criticism of *Griswold* (Bork called the case an act of judicial fiat) if he had known "of the real-life experiences of Ruth and Bob 'Oldendorf,'" parties in an early test case against the Connecticut law, who sought contraception on medical grounds after Ruth suffered a stillbirth and a pregnancy-related stroke.

Sorry, but not a chance. Bork and other *Griswold* critics might have some compassion, but compassion does not a constitutional argument make. Even if it did, appeals to compassion in this context tend to cancel one another out. In the abortion debate, for example, pro-choice demonstrators have waved wire coat hangers as symbols of women's scars from back-alley abortions, and anti-abortion demonstrators have waved back fetuses in jars. Empathetic responses are only as good as the intellectual infrastructure that underlies them.

Garrow is on stronger ground when he links the privacy right to a moral philosophy of personal autonomy. He quotes Bob "Oldendorf" as saying that a reproductive choice is "up to the person themselves." Or as Justice Brennan put the point more grammatically in *Eisenstadt* v. *Baird*, "if the right of privacy means anything, it is the right of the *individual*, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child."

In this view, the right of privacy is no longer a spatial metaphor (Douglas had spoken in *Griswold* of the "sacred precincts of marital bedrooms"); it is a claim about the boundary between personal autonomy and the state. But what is its source? The words of the Framers? The writings of John Stuart Mill? The most striking thing about Garrow's exhaustive account of the *Roe* deliberations is just how little the justices in the majority sought to locate or to document any such source for the ruling that reproductive decision-making is a fundamental aspect of personal autonomy. They held this truth to be self-evident. Justice Powell, for example, said that *Roe* was an easy case because "it is difficult to think of a decision that's more personal or more important to a pregnant woman than whether or not she will bear a child." Again and again in Garrow's account, the relation of privacy to autonomy appears tautological.

To the detractors of *Roe*, this is a fatal flaw. Justice Scalia fulminated in his *Casey* dissent that it will not do to "rattle off a collection of adjectives"—personal, intimate, private and the like—that in his view "conceal a political choice." He would find nothing constitutionally protected unless plain constitutional text says so, or he is certain the Framers or the Reconstruction-era Congress would have said so if asked.

But there is another view, and it is, unlike Scalia's view, dominant on the current Court. Reagan and Bush made five appointments to the Court, and still they failed to make originalism the judicial philosophy of the country. In the now dominant view, doing constitutional interpretation is a lot like making common law. For constitutional common lawyers, the text is a starting point, but it must be illuminated by custom, tradition and precedent, all of which change over time. Justices Harlan and Goldberg took this approach in *Griswold*, as did Justices O'Connor, Kennedy and Souter in their joint opinion in *Casey*; and they now occupy the powerful center of the Court.

Within the common-law approach to the Constitution, it is entirely appropriate for judges to distill "our" traditions and customs or "our" basic social values and to apply them in particular cases. Insulated from politics by life tenure, they exercise "reasoned judgment" to strike a "balance" between the "liberty of the individual" and the "demands of organized society," as the *Casey* joint opinion put it, quoting Harlan. When they do so, they are not, in their view, making something up from scratch, or expressing their personal preferences. To define "liberty" or other open-ended concepts, they look outside themselves, consulting dominant social practices and common cultural understandings. Some things change; the vulcanization of rubber, for example, makes possible the mass production of condoms and diaphragms. But some things do not; they are the bedrock of our legal culture. One of them is that we, unlike China or pre-overthrow Romania, do not allow reproduction to be regulated by the state.

Are common-law constitutionalists lawless radicals? They would say nothing could be more absurd. They are as conservative as originalists, but conservatives of a different kind. They value social custom and consensus and society's organic continuity over time. They find more guidance in the social practices around them than in the discontinuous and now inaccessible historical past. Reagan and Bush might have wanted originalists, but they got Burkeans instead.

The consensus-based nature of the right of privacy was good news for pregnant women, but it was bad news for Michael Hardwick, arrested in Georgia in the mid-1980s for having oral sex with another man at home in his own bed. Garrow is so anxious to celebrate the privacy cases as victories for Millian liberalism that he breezes too lightly past the Court's 1986 *Hardwick* decision, which represented the end of the line.

Hardwick, to which Garrow devotes only a few pages in his final chapter, held that the right of privacy does not protect sex acts between two consenting adults in their own bedroom, at least if they happen both to be men. Thus Garrow's title may be misleading: the judicial link between liberty and sexuality is not constant or tight. In *Hardwick* the Court treated the contraception and abortion decisions as if they had nothing to do with sex or sexuality at all. They concerned the decision "to bear or beget a child," which, for all the Court let on, might have been accomplished by the alighting of seed pods.

Interestingly, Garrow notes how much more explicitly the early privacy combatants talked about sex. While the Court speaks in Victorian euphemisms ("the sacred precincts of the marital bedroom," the decision to "bear or beget"), Catholic priests and bishops spoke

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forthrightly from the pulpit about the sinfulness of recreational sex. *Hardwick* revealed the conventionality at the heart of the Court's interpretation of the privacy right. This conventionality was exactly what one might expect from a common-law approach to the Constitution that looks to custom and tradition as its guide. In an article titled "Eros, Civilization and the Burger Court," Thomas Grey of Stanford cautioned in 1980 against reading the Court's previous privacy decisions as a brief for "sexual freedom." The Court, Grey wrote, mirrored an elite conservative status quo: protect marriage, family and population control, but not unconventional forms of sexual expression. *Hardwick* proved him right.

The genteel social character of the privacy right is evident throughout Garrow's book. In the opening chapters the old bloodlines of Connecticut seek to bring birth control to the spawning urban masses. Toward the end, Garrow notes that the "gentlemanly" Justice Powell, in casting the crucial vote against the privacy claim in *Hardwick*, observed that he had "never met a homosexual." (Garrow points out that he had met several, but he hadn't known it. Powell later said that his vote in *Hardwick* was probably a mistake.) The boundaries of the right to privacy turned out to be the sensibilities of the ruling class.

But Garrow stops short of admitting that this poses a problem for the common-law style of judging that he celebrates throughout the book. Any approach that derives law from "our" traditions, "our" customs and "our" values raises the obvious question: Who are "we"? Lewis Powell, meet Michael Hardwick. Do "we" see "our" values differently now?

Clearly there were limitations on liberty-based arguments against contraception, abortion and sodomy laws, at least as interpreted by a common-law constitutionalist Court. But it does not follow that equality-based challenges would have been the better path, as some have argued. Jeffrey Rosen, for example, recently wrote that privacy is so passé that praising it today is "like publishing a laudatory biography of Erich Honecker just after the fall of the Berlin Wall." Now, he says, equal protection is more in fashion: thus Justice Ginsburg and others have suggested that abortion laws would have been better invalidated as sex discrimination. And many observers have asserted that *Hardwick*, too, should have been argued as an equal protection case, on the ground that sodomy laws discriminate against gay men.

The short answer to these arguments is that, in 1965 or 1973 or 1986, they were legally or strategically doomed. Even after the Court read sex discrimination into the Fourteenth Amendment (hardly an originalist move in any event), it refused to treat burdens on pregnant women as discrimination against women as a class. The Court has never treated poverty as a suspect class, so it would have been futile to argue that the Connecticut birth-control laws unconstitutionally discriminated against poor women. And I feel compelled to point out (as one of Hardwick's lawyers) that *Hardwick* literally could not have been argued as an equal protection case, for the people of Georgia had criminalized all oral and anal sex, gay or straight, and there was no record in the case of selective enforcement.

The long answer is that equality and liberty are mutually reinforcing. Neither should eclipse the other as a strategy for all time. Suppose that the abortion right rested solely on the impermissibility of sex discrimination. Would that mean that in a world consisting only of women (and sperm banks) every pregnancy would have to be carried to term? The problem with equality rights is that they are contingent: they hold only that one should be treated just as well as someone else. But there are some ways that no one should be treated, even if no one else is treated any worse. Liberty supplies an absolute floor above which debates about relative equality may be conducted.

Consider the problem that *Hardwick*'s denial of a right to liberty poses for contemporary claims that gay men and women are denied equal protection of the laws. Owing to *Hardwick* it is taken for granted, for example, that regulation of homosexual conduct by the military is constitutional, however unnecessary or unwise. Thus equal protection challenges to the exclusion of gay servicemembers from the military based on homosexual status may succeed in achieving only the dubious right to serve one's country as a celibate homosexual.

Justice Robert Jackson once suggested that equality serves as a backstop to liberty: there "is no more effective practical guaranty against arbitrary and unreasonable government than to require that the principles of law which officials would impose upon a minority be imposed generally." But liberty can also be a backstop to equality. Liberties of speech or religious exercise only need to be asserted by the dissident or despised minorities whom the majority would oppress. Sometimes it may be easier to end subordination by appealing to abstract rights with which the powerful can identify, rather than by emphasizing what is special and victimized about one's group. All Michael Hardwick asked for was a sacred precinct of his own. Does anyone really believe that Powell would have voted with him if he had asked instead for the deliverance of his people?

Garrow's book should not be dismissed as an anachronism, but valued as an exhaustively researched historical account that enables the patient reader to discern from his raw material both the power and the limits of arguments for reproductive or sexual liberty in an era of common-law constitutionalism that is likely to be with us for a while. It has value not only for constitutional lawyers, but also for all who wish to understand the recent thinking of the Court. And yet it is not the definitive historical account of the abortion controversy. The field remains wide open for books that would illuminate other aspects of the story. There is much more to be said, for example, about the social and legal motivations of the anti-abortion cause. Garrow's protagonists are birth control and abortion advocates, not their opponents. He leaves out huge chunks of the anti-abortion story; thus he describes in detail early Catholic opposition to contraception and abortion while omitting how Protestant fundamentalists took up the opposition leadership later on.

Moreover, Garrow says little about the relationship of law to politics. Did *Roe* itself shift national sentiment to the pro-choice side? By the late 1980s anti-abortion positions were increasingly a liability in political campaigns. Was this at least in part because *Roe* had cultural as well as political effects, transforming abortion access in the national consciousness from a special interest into a fundamental right? Garrow strongly implies as much, but he never directly explores this theme.

Finally, Garrow tells us more about the law on the books than the law in action. Landmark decisions sometimes promise more than they deliver. For example, *Brown* v. *Board*'s pronouncement that "separate is not equal" led to clashes over busing and resegregation by white flight. *Roe*'s legacy is similarly mixed. Post-*Roe* decisions permitted the state and federal governments to deny Medicaid funding for abortions even when

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the costs of childbirth were fully paid. Thus the class-based distinctions that preceded *Roe* (rich women could travel to get abortions that poor women could not) partly survived it. While adult women seeking abortions need not ask permission from their husbands, the Court said pregnant teenagers might have to ask permission from a parent or a judge. And *Casey* approved waiting periods and other obstacles to abortion even for adult women with the private means to pay.

Nor can *Roe*, which restricts only state actions against abortion, stop private efforts by anti-abortion activists ranging from protest to terrorism at clinic doors. And *Roe* cannot teach doctors how to perform abortions or keep them in business if they do. (By some estimates, 80 percent of American counties now lack even a single abortion provider.) But *Roe* and *Casey* ensured that no state may make abortion a crime. That is no mean feat, considering that Louisiana, Utah, Guam and other jurisdictions stood ready to do so if *Casey* had come down the other way. And Garrow's history suggests that, from the pro-choice perspective, things would have been worse, not better, if *Roe* had never come down at all.

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Love Among the Reeds

BY MARY JO SALTER

Quicksand
by Junichiro Tanizaki
translated by Howard Hibbett
(Knopf, 224 pp., $22)

The Reed Cutter
Captain Shigemoto's Mother
by Junichiro Tanizaki
translated by Anthony Chambers
(Knopf, 180 pp., $22)

Surely one of Japan's strangest literary imaginations, Junichiro Tanizaki conveyed, even more than most writers do, a sense that life has to be documented to be believed. Might his birth, in 1886, into a Tokyo family that owned a printing establishment have fostered a temperament that looked to paper and ink for a sense of the real—and then artfully exploited that reality's unreliability?

Tanizaki's vision of real life as a dream was, in any case, so keen that his work often reads as an homage to the ancient strain in Japanese literature that accords pride of place to ghosts and the reincarnated. Applying the scholarly, documentarian side of his personality to the otherworldly side, he footnoted with literary allusions his own murkily historical fictions (which might include real people, but retold events that were legendary, unlikely or even supernatural), as if cold print itself might confirm the unconfirmable. But Tanizaki took literariness to the limit with another, and strikingly modern, technique. He created characters, within the "record" of his novels, who served as painstaking though not always dependable archivists of their own peculiar lives and those of others.

Within much of his fiction, that is, Tanizaki presents us with men and women who have enmeshed themselves in twisted but unbreakable love affairs, bizarre sexual obsessions or practices, elaborate deceptions—and who, though partly wanting to keep their unscrupulous behavior secret, scrupulously record it. They keep journals (as in *The Key*, where a husband and wife each pretend not to be reading the other's diary, and not to know they are themselves being read, so they may silently impart to each other their most shameful fantasies—and thus later manage, under conveniently forgetful intoxication, to enact them) and pornographic photo albums of the beloved (as in *The Key* and *Naomi*) and self-exposing letters and nude sketches and even shocking double vows signed in commingled blood.

Those last three forms of documentation appear in *Quicksand*, which the accomplished translator Howard Hibbett has now rendered into English for the first time. Thanks to Tanizaki's entirely up-to-date subject matter—the refusal of a married woman to renounce her lesbian love affair once it is discovered—as well as a prose style that follows the contortions of the human heart with an unflinching straightforwardness, this compelling novel, first serialized in 1928 to 1930 in the Japanese magazine *Kaizo*, feels for all its strangeness undeniably fresh and immediate to a Western reader at the far end of the century.

In its fascination with the ploys of a femme fatale, it has much in common with its predecessor, *Naomi*, the first novel Tanizaki completed after the great Tokyo earthquake of 1923 propelled him to the Kansai (the Kyoto-Osaka region), in a move that he mistakenly thought would be temporary. But hereafter the heroines would rarely come, as the bar-hostess Naomi had, from Tokyo. The earthquake is generally credited with shaking up Tanizaki's landscape for good: he began to turn away from avant-garde, Western literary influences, and to locate his fiction, either actually or by evocation, in the Japanese past—usually associated with the Kansai, the capital of cultural tradition. So immersed did Tanizaki become in the Japanese past that he produced, over many years, a modern version of *The Tale of Genji*; and updated allusions to *Genji* episodes, with their illicit couplings and idealized romances, abound in his later fiction. Indeed, the appealing literary allusiveness of *Genji* itself—in which reticent and cultivated characters express their feelings with oblique references to then-familiar poems—probably inspired Tanizaki's annotations of some of his own stories.

Written early in his Kansai period, *Quicksand* attracts us with the curiousness of its mix of ancient and modern influences. This bizarre, flapper-age tale is set in a stubbornly old-fashioned Osaka. The lovers meet in art school, where the narrator, the married Sonoko, is sketching a model draped in the robes of a Kannon bodhisattva and realizes that she has unconsciously given her the face of a fellow student, Mitsuko. The two kimono-clad women tryst in traditional inns, or take field trips to see the temples of Nara. When they first become lovers, they wrap around Mitsuko some robelike bed sheets—in whose folds lurk centuries of Buddhist associations—for aphrodisiac purposes. (As if to multiply their naughtiness, though, the women retreat for their loveplay to the one "Western-style" room in Sonoko's house.) And in the oldest Japanese tradition, suicide—even double and triple suicide—is considered at one time or

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another by all the major characters as a serious, perhaps the only, solution to their problems.

Meanwhile the cruel Osaka beauty Mitsuko is a twentieth-century creature indeed, no shrinking dutiful daughter. She takes on lovers to sabotage her arranged-marriage prospects, which at other times she seems desperate to protect. She may look like "the Willow Kannon," but her behavior resembles that of Tanizaki's vampish heroine, Naomi, who finds that neither the preposterous web of lies that she weaves around her lovers, nor the public shame that she brings on them, deflects their adoring gaze. As in *Naomi*, the most humiliated lover is also the narrator—as if some creatures are born to inspire love, and others only to record the inspiration. But in *Quicksand* Tanizaki imagines what is perhaps his most dizzying world of deception, not merely about what has happened but about what hasn't: faked liaisons, faked pregnancies, faked abortions and faked suicides.

By the time the story is told, the more smitten lover, Sonoko, is so undone that she cannot write it herself. We are asked to believe that she is talking out her memories to an unidentified "you." If we weren't cognizant of the decade and the country in which this book originated, we might take the "you" for a psychiatrist. But he is apparently a novelist ("I want you to hear my side of the story," Sonoko says on the first page, and continues, "Are you sure you don't mind? I know how busy you are with your own writing..."), who is implied to be Tanizaki himself, taking time out from fictional tales to set down this real one. As if to prove its authenticity, Tanizaki occasionally inserts an "author's note" documenting palpable evidence such as the stationery used for the two women's love letters:

> May 6, from Mrs. Kakiuchi Sonoko to Mitsuko. The dimensions of the envelope are five inches in length by two and three-fourths inches in width, with cherry and heart-shaped designs on a pink ground. There are five cherries in all, bright-red fruit on black stems. The hearts, of which there are ten, overlap vertically in pairs; those above are pale purple; those below, gold....

Tanizaki's aim is also, of course, to unlock character ("in my opinion, the decorative aspect of the letters is sometimes even more revealing than their content"); but character, to most Japanese, has never been merely a matter of individual temperament or family upbringing. Sonoko and Mitsuko are meant to represent, despite their highly unusual liaison, something essential about the Kansai region that Tanizaki had recently adopted. "I was somewhat taken aback," he says of the stationery:

> Doubtless no Tokyo woman would choose such garish envelopes.... And a man who received a love letter in an envelope like that, supposing he was a Tokyo man, would surely take an instant dislike to the sender. In any case, the taste for that sort of gaudy excess is indeed typical of Osaka women....

And one suspects, once the whole outlandish affair finally gets into the newspapers, that Tanizaki means to show us both the excessiveness and the provinciality of the Kansai—a region that, in other of his works, we're led to see as gentle and refined.

But perhaps the more striking lesson for a Westerner lies outside Tanizaki's intentions. By delineating the complex, even contradictory subtleties of a "regional" character, he inadvertently makes us feel how far away from both Tokyo and the Kansai resides our own sensibility. What drives us from page to page is both a narrative mystery (will Mitsuko get her comeuppance from those she abuses?) and a wider one: How does Tanizaki manage to employ seemingly contradictory approaches to character, veering from psychological interpretations to speculations that the real forces at work are bad karma or birth in Osaka?

Having assimilated all the documents, the very stems on the cherry-decorated envelopes, we still feel at the book's surprise ending that we are subsiding into ever-deeper quicksand. Did Mitsuko love Sonoko after all? In seducing Sonoko's husband, was she driven by spite or by genuine desire or by a wish to subjugate them both? Readers familiar with Tanizaki will recognize the feebleness with which both husband and wife open their mouths like baby birds and allow their mutual lover to empty mysterious potions into them. Drugs infiltrate Tanizaki's work every bit as sickeningly as they do the hippest '90s fiction, and the potions in *Quicksand* allow him to imply, once again, a causal link between sexual ecstasy and self-enervation or even death. Sinking through the levels on which this story is written (and not written), the fascinated but mystified reader may feel a little drugged, too.

In the final scenes the Kannon bodhisattva portrait that Sonoko sketched of Mitsuko is hung in the marital bedroom, as if to stress that something unreal, otherworldly and inexplicable has happened. With her modern drugs, the Kannon/Mitsuko is in fact a venerable type of Japanese enchantress—part courtesan, part goddess, part ghost, a figure of The Floating World. And this psychological tale somewhere along the line quite deliberately throws up its hands. Why does anybody love anybody? Tanizaki doesn't know; but this is a novel resolved less by Western notions of personal motivation than by Japanese beliefs in reincarnation and fate.

"Famous courtesans named Kannon, Nyoi, Censer and Peacock are mentioned in *An Account of Courtesans*," the bookish narrator of *The Reed Cutter* tells us. This novella of 1932 (in a new version by Anthony Chambers) offers continual academic glosses not only on its own story but, retrospectively and implicitly, on *Quicksand*:

> It is said that [the courtesans] took professional names redolent of Buddhism in a belief that selling sexual pleasure was the act of a bodhisattva.... Perhaps, as Saigyo has written, these women have been reborn in Amida's paradise, where they smile with pity that what never changes in any age is the wretchedness of humanity.

In fact, the word "wretched" is (as one of Chambers's own helpful footnotes points out) a connotation of the ideogram that denotes "reed cutting" and "reed cutter."

Such punning was a staple of Heian period literature, and although *The Reed Cutter* is meant to retell nineteenth-century events, its characters seem to feel themselves suspended in a world closer to the one Lady Murasaki recorded nearly a thousand years before. They dress in antiquated costumes and hold annual moon-viewing parties on the fifteenth day of the Eighth Month—traditionally, the optimum evening for gazing at the full moon, and the very evening Tanizaki's tale unfolds. This haunting story-within-a-story (told to the narrator by a mysterious "dealer in antiques" while they crouch among reeds under the full moon) evokes both "the gay world of the past," with its courtesans playing kotos, and the timeless wretchedness of intense and ill-fated love.

It is the sad history of the antique dealer's father, who as a young man had fallen in love with a girlish widow, Oyu. Unfortunately, she had promised her late husband's family never to remarry—and she will take no lover. A wife is provided the young man from an unexpected quarter: Oyu's sister, Oshizu, weds him but then suggests, out of respect for them both, that the marriage never be consummated. The device of one sister being offered in marriage as a substitute for another is a nod in the direction of *The Tale of Genji*. But characteristically, Tanizaki converts even celibacy into a multifaceted perversion.

For Oyu is a typical Tanizaki heroine: not only willful and spoiled, but all the more worshiped for being so. Though she wishes to remain technically chaste, her refusals have more sadism in them

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than purity. And her sister, Oshizu, so much lives to serve Oyu (who is still lactating, though she sends her son to a wet nurse) that when Oyu's breasts are swollen with milk, Oshizu relieves the pain by suckling them—in the presence of the man neither sister will make love with. In time it becomes possible for Ozu to remarry, but this now will do her brother-in-law no good. Wretchedness follows him to the end—which is not exactly an end, to judge from the spectral moon-viewing party we now spy through the reeds. Oyu and friends seem exempt not only from conventional morality but from mortality, too. At the moment Oyu seems to appear, the antique dealer who told the tale melts into the light of the moon.

Though this affecting novella is short, it takes what will feel to most Western readers like a very long while to get to the point. Tanizaki's narrator first fills page after page with the geography of the Kansai region, down to its train lines ("Yamazaki is in Otokuni District, Yamashiro Province, and Minase in Mishima District, Setsu Province. When taking the New Keihan Line from Osaka to Oyamazaki, one crosses the border between Setsu and Yamashiro..."); and with the history, it seems, of all Japanese and even Chinese literature, in both prose and verse. Though the significance of the story's locale is pinpointed—"Thus Kyoto and Osaka are linked by the Yodo River, but their climates and cultures differ, and this is the dividing line"—such subtleties will be lost on most of us, who are doing well to differentiate Kyoto and Osaka, as a unit, from Tokyo. One ends up focusing instead on the author's more general, age-old associations of bridges, boats, water, pleasure-seeking and the dream-like ephemerality of life itself.

I like to hope I wasn't entirely missing the boat, though, in concluding that Tanizaki had with deliberate irony overloaded the reader with "documentation"—much as he recorded the measurements of every sheet of stationery in *Quicksand*—in order to ground in actuality the very irreality of his tale. For *The Reed Cutter* is essentially a ghost story. In Western ghost stories, too, we need to be convinced of the reasonableness of the narrator—often, like Tanizaki's storyteller, a scholarly type—for the final frisson to work its magic.

Another sexually dysfunctional marriage invites a third party to supplement it in *Captain Shigemoto's Mother*, the novella that Anthony Chambers has paired with *The Reed Cutter* in one volume. His clear translation of this multitiered tale of 1949 is, a note tells us, the first in English, although the original was Tanizaki's widow's favorite among her husband's works. The story's artistry notwithstanding, her evaluation astonishes—for one needs a strong stomach to read it at all.

Like *The Reed Cutter*, but more explicitly so, *Captain Shigemoto's Mother* owes a good deal to *The Tale of Genji*. The narrator not only quotes extensively from Heian literature, he peoples his story with such historical characters in *Genji* as "the famous amorist" Heiju. So many old tales are interwoven into Tanizaki's original that one can't possibly do them justice here. Suffice to say that initially we believe that Heiju's pursuit of the beautiful and elusive Jiju will provide the main plot. A time-honored fusion of courtesan and phantom, Jiju receives Heiju in her dark bedroom—only to disappear at the crucial moment.

So tormented is Heiju by this rare rejection, so besotted does he grow even after Jiju gives herself to him but remains "as sarcastic as before," that he convinces himself he can demystify his beloved only by stealing a look into her chamber pot. When Jiju's maid, under protest, relinquishes the elegant gold-lacquered box, Heiju is puzzled by "a savory fragrance like that of clove incense":

> Then he nibbled a bit of the object he had impaled upon a stick. It was both bitter and sweet. He gave the matter some thought as he explored the taste carefully with his tongue. What looked like urine must be a decoction of cloves; the lumps that looked like feces would be a blend of yam, incense and sweet-grass nectar.... What a resourceful woman, he thought, to see into a man's heart and go to such lengths to bewitch him with her chamber pot! She was, indeed, no ordinary person. His love for her only grew stronger.

Soon afterward, "bewildered by love," Heiju falls ill and dies (though one wonders whether his diet had anything to do with it). As the chamber pot scene lodges darkly in some recess of the reader's brain, to be illuminated later, the principal and chronologically earlier story rises to the surface.

Now in his 80s, Major Counselor Kunitsune had fathered a boy with his very young wife a few years earlier. As he begins to lose sexual potency, the old man clings more and more desperately to his wife. His nephew, Shihei, gets him drunk at a party, and—in a scene that's oddly reminiscent of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*—the husband groggily, but publicly and thus irrevocably, agrees to hand his wife over to another man, Shihei, forever. Unlike Hardy's hero, Kunitsune hasn't sold his young wife; he has relinquished her out of tortured love, a wish to give her pleasure. Once he wakes, though, his regret is so profound that he enters a living death, one in which even his son—the young Shigemoto of the title—can bring him no solace.

And Shigemoto can be little comforted by his father. Late one evening the boy secretly follows him on a mission. It seems old Kunitsune is in the habit of

Border Incident

Near dawn, the clear sky is one
multitudinous flittering—hosts of pipistrelles
abroad under the paling moon. Not,
to your untuned human ears, a sound
out of their vast assembly—slivers of shadow
silvered by moonlight, livid
hungers on the wing—nor out
of those invisible insects
thronging the air they gorge on.

In the next field, the guns
have been buried for ages
in burlap and paper, protected from rust
under the roots of dandelion and delicate thrift,
waiting for this dark form to bend,
digging, drawing one out. He straightens,
hardly aims, squeezes the trigger: what
mad scattering, shattered echoes, the bodies
coming down like a cloudburst of ripe figs.
As you hurry your children into the cellar
you hear silence slowly recomposing,
the little one crying so you carry her,
herding all in and bolting the heavy door.

You crouch in the dark and listen:
all over the province
the same thing happening: a noise
as of death entering the world
without warning, the echoes
banging every door—*your turn! this time
your turn!*—then dying away
to a minute's silence in which you hear
nothing, first, and after—like someone
fumbling a lock—the strange sounds
of your neighbour's breath and steady heartbeat,
the slow tick of church-tower clocks, spires
shivering, the shock of bells.

Eamon Grennan

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meditating in a graveyard at night—where shallowly buried, fetid corpses are dug up and gnawed at by dogs. Once the old man realizes his practice has been discovered, he enlightens Shigemoto as to the Buddhist principle under which he has been trying to forget his abandoned but adored wife. In an entirely unfunny recapitulation of the chamber pot scene—which Tanizaki never recalls explicitly—Kunitsune instructs his son in the Contemplation of Impurity. The study of the putrefying corpse of a once-beautiful young woman should lead us to the knowledge that "the various carnal pleasures of mankind are nothing more than momentary illusions"; and as a Buddhist sage of India also taught, "vessels are like skulls, rice like worms and clothing like the skins of serpents." (I suspect that only a person who lives, as the Japanese traditionally have done, on three rice-based meals a day can begin to compass the horror of such a teaching.)

But perhaps so thorough a renunciation of life, however noble a goal, is rarely arrived at. According to Shigemoto's diary, it isn't long until his father takes up sake again and gives up the sutras. We are forced to conclude that he "died unredeemed—defeated by the beautiful phantasm of his beloved and clinging to Eternal Illusion." It isn't so difficult, after all, to see why Tanizaki's widow might find uplifting a work that brought us to such a conclusion.

Throughout Tanizaki's work, the poems and the stories-within-stories, the letters and the diaries (and even the legible evidence of chamber pots and graveyards and rice bowls) point to the wickedness and the wretchedness of human existence. Yet it seems that neither the beauty of a young woman's face nor the longing it inspires is entirely expungeable. In the final paragraphs, one of the simplest love scenes Tanizaki ever wrote, the grown Captain Shigemoto recognizes the mother that had been taken from him as a child. She is now an aged Buddhist nun, and when he falls into her arms one feels a profound relief to discover how natural and honest his instinct is: only to wipe "his tears again and again with her sleeve."

One thinks back to the amusing but cynical first pages of the novella, in which Heiju repeatedly feigns tears—secretly wets his eyes from a flask of water—in order to win a woman's heart. No fool, she retaliates by staining his water (and thus his tears) with ink. It's as if that passage has now been reinterpreted by an author whose pen and ink accommodate true sentiment. Tanizaki himself had arrived, however fleetingly, at the Contemplation of Purity. •

You deserve a factual look at...

Peace in the Middle East (2)

Is the peace with Egypt an encouraging example for Israel?

In the on-again/off-again Mid-East Peace negotiations the Arabs expect that, in exchange for peace, the territories that they consider to be "occupied" by Israel be restored to them, specifically, the so-called "West Bank", Gaza, and the Golan Heights.

What are the facts?

Peace with Egypt is the coldest possible. For its agreement to make true peace with Israel, Egypt received the huge Sinai Peninsula in which Israel had invested over $10 billion. It had created flourishing cities, some of the most advanced military and naval installations in the world, and had developed oil fields that would have made it energy independent for the foreseeable future. Without firing a shot, Egypt received all of this, plus generous grants from the United States—$40 billion to date. What Egypt gave in return was a piece of paper. And even that was hedged. It would allow Egypt to join in an "Arab War" against Israel. The peace between Israel and Egypt, which the Israelis had envisioned to be like the peace between Germany and France, turned out, unfortunately, to be the "coldest peace" possible. It is, less of a peace than a de facto state of non-belligerence. The Israeli ambassador in Cairo is isolated and blacklisted and does not participate in any official functions of the Egyptian government. There is practically no trade between the two countries and no cultural exchange. The public sector of Egypt, which constitutes 80% of the total economy is forbidden to do business with Israel. Private enterprises are actively discouraged and often threatened when they try to become engaged with Israeli firms. Israeli firms are barred form submitting tenders for local projects. For "security reasons" Israeli firms are not allowed to participate in trade fairs. Although quite a few Israelis visit Egypt, hardly any Egyptians go to Israel since those who do wish to visit are summoned to the security police for lengthy interrogation.

Not forthcoming on diplomatic front. Many Israelis have been killed in Egypt or on the Egyptian border. The Egyptian media, including the official and semi-official press, are full of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish venom, preaching hatred and prejudice. There have been numerous instances of "crazed" Egyptian soldiers shooting up Israeli buses traveling along the border highways, to the general applause of the state-controlled media. On the diplomatic front, the Egyptians aren't any more forthcoming. Egypt spearheaded the campaign to keeping the "Zionism is racism" resolution in the U.N., contrary to U.S. wishes. Egypt exerts much effort to prevent African countries from establishing or renewing diplomatic relations with Israel. Egyptian diplomats, including Butros-Butros Ghali, now secretary general of the United Nations, lobbied fervently against the loan guarantees that Israel needed to absorb and to settle the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who have already arrived or will still arrive form the former Soviet Union.

"Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current peace negotiations."

The saving grace for Israel in its very cold peace with Egypt is that the Sinai is very large, and serves as a buffer zone. But in the Golan Heights, which the Syrians wish to have returned in exchange for "peace", and the "West Bank" and Gaza, which the Palestinians whish to have given to them as a "reward" for stopping the "intifada", there is no room at all for buffer zones. Although autonomy for the native Arab population is definitely an Israeli policy goal and a commitment under the Camp David Accords, the "West Bank" and Gaza and the Golan cannot possibly be surrendered to another sovereignty for any foreseeable future. It would make Israel totally indefensible. If the peace with Egypt is an example of what peace with Syria or with the Palestinians would look like, Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current negotiations and not to entrust its survival to empty promises. Only when the Arabs truly accept Israel as part of the Middle East should any further "land for peace" adjustments be considered.

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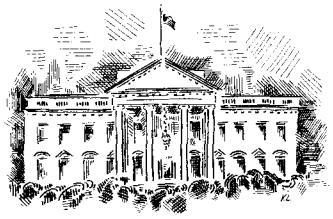
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Plant life

ONCE, WHEN I LIVED IN ANOTHER city, I was given four healthy, green miniature cactuses. For a long time we lived together effortlessly, they in their ceramic vessel atop the battered white windowsill beside my desk and I at my desk gazing over them. Sadly, this pleasant situation came to an end. I had to move, and discovered that it's not easy to move four cactuses, no matter how small. Cactuses can't be crated, because they're alive; they don't merit pet-caliber coddling, because they're plants. Since they were a gift, I couldn't hand them over to someone else, nor could I bring myself simply to abandon them. Also, like most cactuses, they were difficult to handle by virtue of their considerable prickliness. Given the other stresses in my life at the time, I found myself unwilling to sift through the metaphysical considerations of their fate. Weeks went by. The burden grew heavier. I started to loathe them. Finally, on the day of departure, and with no time left to think, I grudgingly heaved the pot under my arm (stabbing my ribs) and rushed out of the room, leaving behind only an ocher ring where this small but congenial universe had been.

THOUGH THEY MADE IT IN AND out of the car on the move to Washington, the cactuses never really were the same again. They languished, demanding more care, experimentation with exotic soils, intensities of light. This was more than I could take. Responsibility for their life and death was evidently something I didn't want to deal with. For a time, I left them in an only occasionally sunny corner of my new kitchen, where I watered them only sporadically. Even that grated on me. But what was I to do? Some ties can't be consciously severed. Then, on a damp fall day, I arrived at a deranged but emotionally comforting compromise: the cactuses would return to a windowsill, but this time I thrust them outside. I told myself that they would be quenched regularly by the rain, and nourished by sparrow droppings. But I was kidding myself. I knew I had sentenced them to a cold and shameful death. More perversely still, this arrangement ensured that their demise would take place in front of my eyes, for their new perch looked in on the room where I ate my breakfast.

WIND CHILL. ICE STORMS. BLIZzards. The cactuses struggled through it all like pioneers. And I, warm and slippered, with my rich coffee, steaming oatmeal and saucy, golden grapefruits, could see them on the periphery of my life. From the table where I sat under the watchful eyes of a tiny wooden Buddha, I could almost imagine their undernourished breath casting a faint mist on the windowpane. But I didn't lift a finger, all winter. By March, they were gone, reduced to a carcass of thorns. Their now brown flesh had receded, as if they had tried to hide in the rocky soil. As spring appeared, and the forest around the windowsill sprouted green, the cactuses looked as skeletal and washed-out as an adobe village.



CLEARLY MY RELAtionship with these plants was complicated. But malicious? What demon prevented me from putting down my serrated fruit spoon, opening the window, reaching out and rescuing them? I searched for some plant-related trauma from my childhood in Portland, Oregon. Not much came up. There was the annual Rose Festival, with its drunken Fun Center, its red-blazered Royal Rosarians, its frothy high school Rose Princesses who rode around town in snappy Chevy ragtops, stopping traffic. It tended to overshadow my June birthday, which was annoying, but I don't think it scarred me. There was also my mother's green period. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a time when nearly every room of our house had a sand-candle cradled in a macrame or leather-thong holder, my mother devoted a substantial portion of her days to plant care. She was so good at it that people would bring her their ailing ficuses, their wilting ferns, and she would almost always nurse the vegetation back to health. For a while one hallway was so clotted with organic matter that we had to devise alternate routes to the kitchen. Irksome, but hardly grist for a full-blown aversion.

OF COURSE, THE SOURCE OF MY behavior lay elsewhere. And recently, as I was cleaning out my desk, it became clear to me: jammed between a wicker basket and a stack of catalogs, creased and discolored from the months it had been awaiting my signature and exactly as neglected as the cactuses, was the first draft of my last will and testament and the invoice for its unwelcome creation.

SO THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN intimations of mortality intrude on the quotidian: I kill my cactuses. I "forget" to sign my will. Certainly, I have no illusions that my dilemma—not wanting to die, but not wanting to assume the obligations of the world beyond my youth—is a particularly new one. "In the middle of the journey of our life I came to myself within a dark wood where the straight way was lost," wrote Dante. The terror of middleness endures.

AT 30, THE TUG TOWARD FULL adult responsibility is as emphatic as the thick-tongued clack of a roller coaster on its initial ascent. The deaths of Richard Nixon and Kurt Cobain deepened this sense of being drawn irrevocably into the middleness of my life. Nixon's face was one of the first in my extrafamilial consciousness. Pictures of him are as old as home movies, bright and jerky with a red stripe across the screen at the end—discreet 707s; imperial motorcades; spare, patriotic campaign buttons; glimpses of the Western White House in living color; dark suits; an even darker visage. If the dominant icon from your youth is dead, it follows that your youth must be gone, too. Kurt Cobain's death came at me from the opposite direction: much as I liked his music, I was not much interested in his suicide, for I was too old to identify with what passes for a modern Werther. Looking at those kids gathered in Seattle to mourn him, I knew we were seeing different worlds. Only when I read in *Star* that Cobain first shot heroin after taking out a mortgage on his house did I finally feel a flicker of identification.

WHICH IS MORE THAN I WILL FEEL about those 70-year-old men who, if the French let them, will parachute onto the beaches of Normandy this summer. They will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. The gesture makes me half believe those tiresome observers who argue that my generation, untempered by a mass ordeal, is more reluctant than others have been to accept the duties of adulthood. They have a point. After all, what, finally, would we parachute for? I'm willing to grant that a depression, a good war, or even a bad war, can be central to a generation's willingness to enter into responsibility. But I'd vouchsafe, too, that for times like the present, we'd do well to redefine downward our rites of passage. Perhaps adulthood should be won by the less glorious challenge of merely being able to keep things alive.

DAVID SHIPLEY

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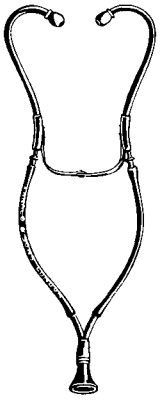

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